





THE
SKETCH BOOK OF FASHION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
“MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS.”

Invest me in my motley ; give me leave
To speak my mind and I will through and through
Cleanse the foul body of th' infected world.
AS YOU LIKE IT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

THE SECOND MARRIAGE.
THE OLD AND THE YOUNG BACHELOR.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.)

1833.

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THE
SECOND MARRIAGE;

CONTINUED.

VOL. II.

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CHAPTER V.

Fair Hero is won;—and his good will obtained, name the day of marriage!

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

WITH two young lovers eager to be married, and a father and mother equally eager to hasten their hymeneals, there is little likelihood of delay. It was not much more than a week before Julia Trevelyan suffered herself to be persuaded into an opinion that nothing could have been more natural than Redwood's conduct towards her; and as to the squire and his lady, *their* triumph was unconditional. Mrs. Trevelyan had the comfort of proving to Lady Wadman how groundless had been her inuendoes respecting her future son-in-law; and Mr. Trevelyan the joy of discovering that Sir Alan's estates were full six thousand a year more extensive

than he had been led to believe. Instead of going into the family of Redwood as an heiress, the fair Julia of Trevelyan Park would scarcely take with her an equivalent for all the splendours and prosperity of her new condition.

A day was appointed for the marriage about six weeks after the *éclaircissement* of the Horatian Villa, to give time for the return of a courier from England, where the legal preliminaries were to be adjusted; and in the mean time, the bride and bridegroom elect had nothing to do but to play Romeo and Juliet, in all the luxury of an Italian spring, while old Capulet and his Lady stood afar off watching their proceedings, and congratulating each other that they had not allowed their precious pearl to remain closed up in the dull oysterbed of their Cornish estates.

It has been already admitted that Miss Trevelyan's eyes were the bluest, her tresses the most silken, her figure the most symmetrical, that imagination can picture. But Julia possessed a personal charm beyond even these important advantages. She had a countenance full

of sensibility ; a countenance the very mirror of her mind ; a countenance over which the clouds and sunshine chased each other with the sportive variability of an autumnal sky ; one minute, summer seemed lingering there in utmost glory,—the next, there was a cloud, a dreariness, a darkness, quickly to be dispelled by a new dawn of the refulgent sunshine of perfect happiness. And yet she was not capricious. —The changes of the weatherglass were solely dependent on the atmosphere shed around it by the one all potent orb, influencing the ebb and flow of her heart's emotions ; and it was already in Redwood's power to overcast her sprightliest mood, or call up an April ray amid the utmost desolation of her tears. To repress this exquisite but fatal sensibility, Miss Wilmot had laboured hard in her vocation. It is true she made no boast on the subject to her employers ; for she knew full well that Mrs. Trevelyan's alarms once excited, she would do her best to tranquillize her daughter's nerves by worrying her into a fever ; nor would the old gentleman have hesitated to apply half the contents of his medicine chest to

the aggravation of the disorder. She contented herself with striving to fortify the mind of her pupil with principle and her heart with reason ; trusting she might outgrow an infirmity commonly classed among the diseases of youth. On retiring to her modest retreat at Devizes, the worthy woman even flattered herself that the danger was past; and knowing her pupil to be fenced round by the prosperities of life from the common cares of human nature, ventured to anticipate for her as bright a destiny as any child of wrath is entitled to expect in a probationary world. One might almost venture to conclude that presentiment had led her to expect that the object of her affectionate solitudes would fall into the hands of the high minded Sir Alan Redwood, with an income of forty thousand per annum; a very creditable measure of precedence among the Sir Johns and Sir Thomases, his brethren ; and a character that might have borne the scrutiny of the most scrupulous club in the parish of St. James.

She did not, however, anticipate, or if she had, would have repelled the notion as inauspi-

cious to the happiness of the gentle Julia, that the very sensibility she had so laboured to exterminate, with its sunshine and shadows, its smiles and tears, was the chief source of her attraction in the eyes of her future husband. Redwood was a distrustful man, and prized nothing more highly than the glass window thus enabling him to pry into the mind of the object of his tenderness. The enhancement of beauty arising from the variations perceptible upon Julia Trevelyan's dimpled face, were as nothing in comparison with the insight they afforded into her thoughts and feelings. "The eloquent blood," that spoke in her cheeks was a welcome tell-tale; and her tears possessed an oratory of unappreciable value.

There could not, indeed, be a greater contrast of disposition than between Sir Alan and the lady of his love. Redwood's commanding height, austere address, stern features, and impassive countenance, seemed only the sterner and more commanding now that a flower had sprung up beside the rock, in contrast with its rugged coldness; and Lady Wadman and the

coteries shrugged their shoulders and smiled contemptuously, when they saw them sitting together evening after evening, often without uttering a syllable, and certainly looking none of those things that are said to be unutterable. Julia, in truth, felt too happy, too contented, to venture on bending her radiant smiles on her observant lover ; while Sir Alan was too much on his guard against the world, against its inferences, and above all, against himself, to render his tenderness a matter of comment to the vulgar tongue, or of self-assured possession to his future wife.

Nevertheless, his expressions were not always measured, nor Julia's sweet looks ever hoarded up from his participation. Lady Wadman's eyes were not always upon them ; and during those long spring days that intervened between betrothment and marriage, those days of growing daylight and progressive vegetation, when every morning dawned upon brighter blossoms and fresher verdure, it was indeed a holiday of spirit to them both, to wander together through the gardens of the Villa Borghese or some other

belrespiro; while the old people sat prosing together in a favourite pavilion, bending their idolizing eyes from a distance upon the fair figure of their daughter; her white raiment glancing among the dark evergreens, like the shining radiance of an angel guest wandering amid the paths of Paradise.

How happy she was,—how bright,—how beautiful!—all her wishes accomplished,—all her hopes surpassed. It was no longer possible to doubt that Redwood loved her:—his looks, his words, his eagerness to secure her society, his anxious plans to render their future life less world-absorbed than the ordinary career of dinner-giving, ball-haunting existence, all conspired to re-assure her misgivings. That he had sought her for herself alone, was indisputable;—and her only care was to appear, or render herself worthy of, the choice which *she* (lovely and gifted and good as she was) regarded as an effort of the most gracious toleration.

There was still, however, one single speck on Julia's horizon—(what horizon *can* be altogether cloudless?)—which cast a hovering shadow

over the airy distance of her prospects. The object of her tenderness *had* already loved ; the husband of her young heart *had* already cherished a beloved and loving wife in his bosom. Perhaps he was even yet influenced by the memory of those ties, that tenderness?—Perhaps she was secondary in his esteem to the Mary whose hair still encircled his finger?—Were not his thoughts sometimes secretly occupied in comparing *her* person with that of the first Lady Redwood,—*her* sentiments with those of his early choice,—*her* voice with the voice that was silent,—*her* smile with a smile now set for ever in the stillness of the grave?—This dispiriting idea, once conceived, often caused her blood to freeze in her veins !—To be subordinate in a heart that was all in all to her !—To bear a part, only, in the destiny which was to her as the well-spring of her own existence !—

What worlds would she not have squandered to give utterance but to the smallest of her alarms on the forbidden subject,—to approach, even at a remote distance, the history of his wedded life ;—to whisper, “Was she young, fair,

confiding, affectionate?—Did you love her as you love *me*, or rather as *I* doat upon yourself? Have I cause to apprehend that the shadow of the dead will interpose between your heart and your living wife?"—But no!—such an appeal would have been hazardous with any created mortal; and with Redwood *fatal*. Julia felt assured that, should she venture to breathe the most distant allusion to this delicate topic, he would start off,—fly from her presence,—abandon her for ever! He would give himself no time to reflect upon the anxious tenderness suggesting her uneasiness on the subject; but dismiss her at once from his heart, and see her face no more!

Often, when they sat together side by side and hand in hand, in some sequestered nook among the espaliers of blossoming orange-trees of the Ludovisian gardens, listening to the busy murmur of the bees and watching the gradual unfolding of the variegated parterres;—or with upturned eyes speculating upon that majestic vault above, which in Italy seems to connect, unimpaired by baser matter, the throne of the

Creator with the earth his footstool,—a sudden thought that even so he might have sat, so ruminated, so eloquently discoursed of the glory of God with another and more congenial spirit, caused the sweet face of Julia Trevelyan to glow with a sudden flush, and the words to expire upon her trembling lips. What availed it to her affection to share the outpouring of his gratitude for the beauteousness and plenteousness of the created earth;—what availed it to trace with him the palpable connection between every good and holy thought arising in their minds, and the eternal and informing Spirit whose dwelling place was so bright over their heads;—if that earth held its chief influence in his mind as the resting place of her he had lost,—if that ethereal realm on high, shone brightest in his eyes as the spot where *she* was waiting to welcome him to yet more intense communion! —Julia,—Julia who in the excess of her attachment would have renounced every human pleasure and every human association for his sake, shrunk from this grievous division of his

affections. It withered up the glowing pulses of her heart, to think that the love with which their energy was repaid was only comparative !

But where was her remedy?—what the alternative?—To love him less, to withdraw a proportionate quantity of her own tenderness, was impossible. Her fate was wrapt up in even that divided portion of his tenderness which he vouchsafed to bestow. She must be patient ; or rather must labour diligently in all the vigilance of day by day devotion to his will, to conquer to herself a stronger hold on his feelings.

Such were the sentiments with which she approached the altar. Such was the moderated triumph with which this object of envy to so many, of congratulation to more, accepted the brilliant prospects that awaited her on returning to her native country as the wife of Sir Alan Redwood, Baronet, of Farminghurst Castle in the County of York, and Burnley Wood in the County of Middlesex ; as the proprietress of the prettiest villa, finest diamonds, best equipage, and most ancient plate ; the mistress

in short of a destiny as bright and promising as even her too idolizing parents, in the plenitude of their partiality, could have selected for their only child.

CHAPTER VI.

Safe out of Fortune's shot she sits aloft,
Advanc'd above pale Envy's threatening reach ;
As when the golden Sun salutes the morn,
And, having gilt the ocean with his beams,
Gallops the ocean with his glittering car,
And overlooks the highest peering hills.

TITUS ANDRONICUS.

ENGLISH newspapers are generally very busy about new married people. The arrival in London of Sir Alan and Lady Redwood was announced with considerable pomp; and the world was moreover informed that it was the intention of "the amiable couple" to pass only a few days in London, previous to their departure for their seat in Yorkshire.

Julia, who had not visited the metropolis since her attainment of woman's estate, had in fact very few connections there to induce a prolongation of her sojourn; and although they

made their appearance in the height of the London season, although the suffocating atmosphere of many a ball-room demonstrated the fulness of town and the gaiety of the coteries, she had not yet been married long enough to have acquired the least ambition for the display of her diamonds, or the exhibition of her *trousseau*. Mrs. Trevelyan, who had given a parting charge to her son-in-law on no account to postpone Lady Redwood's presentation, or encourage her taste for moping at home, would have been shocked had she suspected that a few visits to the theatre in a morning dress, for the purpose of witnessing certain *chef-d'œuvres* of the English stage, formed the extent of her daughter's dissipation during this her bridal visit.

"Do let us get away as soon as possible," whispered Julia to her husband, pointing out to him the moss-roses contained in the basket of a dirty flower-girl, who stood curtsying opposite the windows of the hotel. "The country is just now so beautiful; and I am so anxious to have a glimpse of my new flower-gardens, and a

ride with you through Redwood Forest before the wild thyme is out of bloom.—Why not go to-morrow?—What have we to detain us?”

“You forget,” replied Sir Alan, coldly, “that the Walpoles have promised to be in town on Monday, to give me a sight of my little girl.”

“No! I did not forget their promised visit,” replied Julia, blushing deeply; “but you never told me that little Mary was to accompany them. I understood she was at Weymouth for the benefit of sea air.”

“She *is* at Weymouth. But Mr. and Mrs. Walpole are of course desirous that I should see her; and, concluding that so long a journey would be unwelcome to you, and that I should be unwilling to leave you just now, they have wisely and kindly decided on bringing her to town. Mrs. Walpole is a very conscientious, as well as a very sensible woman. However desirous of retaining her little grandchild under her care, she is too prudent to wish that Mary should be wholly estranged from her father.”

“Could you not persuade her, then, to let us

take the little girl into Yorkshire;" inquired Julia, involuntarily trembling at the notion of sharing Redwood's affections with any other living creature.

"No," replied Sir Alan, fixing one of his scrutinizing glances upon her face; "it would terrify poor Mrs. Walpole were I so soon to demand the surrender of her little charge. Besides, knowing you to be unaccustomed to children, I fancy she would be alarmed at the notion of Mary's falling to your care before you have acquired a little nursery experience. She implied as much, indeed, in the letter I received from her at Paris."

"The letter he had received from Mrs. Walpole at Paris!"—He *had* then received a letter, without adverting to the contents, or even acquainting her with the circumstance. He probably regarded the subject as too sacred for *her* participation. Mrs. W. had doubtless addressed him to advocate and defend the rights and claims of her grandchild; or perhaps, even with a view of keeping alive the memory of her daughter in his heart—of reminding him of

“the former Lady Redwood;”—or of “his dear Mary!”—Yes! he was certainly in the habit of calling her his “dear Mary” in his correspondence with her family.—His “dear Mary!”—Oh! that another woman should have possessed—should *still* possess sufficient dominion in his mind to be the object of his endearing appellations—his lingering regrets! Lady Redwood (the *second* Lady Redwood) turned coldly away from the window, observing in a tone of pique, “I dare say Mrs. Walpole is right; I am quite of her opinion, that the guardianship of her grandchild could not be committed to worse hands than mine.”

The bridegroom was now piqued in his turn. Nothing had he so much at heart as that his gentle Julia should attach herself to his little motherless girl, and that an affection should spring up between them. It was in the hope that some proposal would arise on her part for Mary’s return to her natural home, that he had encouraged Mrs. Walpole’s proposal of bringing her to town; and partly in delicacy, or calculating perhaps too largely on the perversity of

her sex, he had opposed her suggestion only in the hope that his apparent indifference would stimulate her own inclination for her daughter-in-law's company. Totally unprepared for her cool and abrupt dismissal of the subject, he was for a few minutes almost inclined to express resentment of her conduct; and nothing but the certainty that quarrels or reproofs would form a bad preparative for the tenderness with which he wished to inspire her, prevented him from assuring his bride that little Mary had too happy a home and too many friends and protectors, to be under any necessity for courting the kindness of a step-mother. It was only by hastily quitting the room, that he escaped the temptation of giving vent to his feelings.

But when they met again, all was forgotten! The child did not altogether engross the hearts or minds of the bride and bridegroom. Sir Alan, when he entered the drawing-room a few minutes before dinner and found his lovely Julia watching beside the window for his return, her cheek flushed with expectation, and her lips parted by anxiety, could not refrain from

folding to his heart the beautiful being who started up and sprang forward to welcome him home. She had made an engagement during his absence to pass the evening at her uncle Mr. Trevanion's, and was attired in something more nearly approaching to full dress than he had seen her wear for two months past; nor could he resist drawing back from her embraces to contemplate, with renewed admiration, the graceful turn of her head, the rounded outline of her arms, the symmetrical elegance of her whole person. The vexations of the morning were forgotten in Julia's delight at being again by her husband's side;—in Redwood's triumph in the lavish affection of so charming, so gifted a creature. He almost regretted that any other eyes were to feast themselves on her beauty; and prepared somewhat with an ill grace to fulfil their engagement to his old friend, the remote origin of his present happiness.

• The Trevanions were what is termed “serious people.” They were not methodists—their worship was strictly orthodox; but so strictly, that the worldly-minded, who grudged them a

reputation and consciousness of sanctity, for the acquirement of which themselves had no mind to sacrifice the levities of life, branded them with the name of "Saints," and fled from the baleful example of their virtues. These it is true were not arrayed in their most attractive garb. Mrs. Trevanion's piety was of an austere and cheerless order; and her husband, if he refrained from the hair-shirt and discipline of the heretic church, scrupled not to apply a similar castigation to his mind; and on a point of principle, to make himself and those about him as uncomfortable as he conveniently could. On learning, for instance, the tidings of his niece Julia's approaching marriage with a man whom he had himself announced to the Trevelyans as every way qualified to render her the happiest of women, he considered it his duty to dispatch a letter to his sister, reminding her that misfortune lurks in the palace no less than in the cabin; and that sickness, sorrow, and early death, appear to delight in exercising their cruel influence in the homes of the prosperous.

To the eye of a man of this description the

arrival of Lady Redwood, young, gay, fair, smiling, joyous, brilliant, afforded only a theme for painful presentiments. It was not often that so bright a creature sat smiling in his sober drawing-room; and while poor Sir Alan fell to the share of Mrs. Trevanion and two sanctimonious-looking individuals of questionable gender, who added little more to the conversation than a few hems and groans,—Julia was decoyed by her uncle to a sofa at the other extremity of the room, to be mortified into a more Christian frame of mind by his Jeremiads.

“I am surprised, my dear,” said he, “that your parents did not accompany you to England?”—

“My father was of opinion that so long a journey was undesirable for mamma, during the summer heats.”

“Then you should have persuaded Sir Alan to defer his return to England till the autumn.”

“He has business in Yorkshire that admits of no delay.”

“Could not your marriage have been deferred till it was possible for my sister and Tre-

velyan to come back with you for its solemnization here? My dear, I do not wish to blame you, but I think your duty to them might have suggested such a plan."

"Had I proposed it, my mother would have refused her sanction. She was very anxious to hasten the marriage."

"Ay, ay!—poor thing; I fancy she finds her health declining. My dear, I do not wish to alarm you; but at her time of life, health is a precarious thing: and there is only too much cause to fear, in leaving a person of her years in a trying climate, that you may never meet again. I am sadly afraid, my dear Julia, that—"

"Oh! no no,—pray do not say so," exclaimed Lady Redwood in great agitation. "I assure you my mother's health is much as I have known it for the last fifteen years. She has promised to be with us at the Castle in October; and I trust, my dear uncle, you will meet her there, and admit that your apprehensions were premature."

"I trust so,—I am sure I trust so," replied Mr. Trevanion with a deep sigh; "but I own

I anticipate the worst. Pray my love, when has Sir Alan determined to quit town?"

"We are waiting only for Mrs. Walpole's arrival," said his niece blushing deeply. "She has promised to bring up our little girl from Weymouth."

"Our little girl?—Oh! little Miss Redwood I presume? Ah! poor little dear;—she comes home to live with you I suppose?"—

"No,—her mother's family are anxious to retain her some time longer."

"And you intend to sanction such a measure?"

"Sir Alan very naturally thinks that as her health is delicate, it will be better for her to reside near the sea, and with persons experienced in the care of children."

"But surely, my love, you intend to resist such a determination?"

"And why?—I can have no object but the welfare of the little girl."

"My dear, your own future happiness cannot but be of some account in your eyes."

"I must not pretend to be less selfish than other people," said Julia, trying to rally her

spirits, which were sinking under the influence of her uncle's solemn tones and lugubrious aspect; "but I really see no cause to fear that I shall be a sufferer from Mrs. Walpole's kindness to her grandchild."

"Are you acquainted with Mrs. Walpole?"—

"Only from Redwood's reports."

Mr. Trevanion said nothing, but *looked*, "So much the better for *you*!"

"Sir Alan describes her as a sensible well intentioned person."

"Yes, very sensible; more sensible than tolerant or indulgent. She has great influence over your husband's mind, and you must take care that it is not exercised to your detriment. In your place, I should hesitate about having the child too long under her charge. Mrs. Walpole will probably inspire her with sentiments towards yourself, and general principles, such as may render her hereafter a somewhat uneasy inmate."

"Do you think so?" involuntarily ejaculated Julia.

"The life of a stepmother is commonly a

stormy one," replied her uncle, without compassionating the alarm betrayed in Lady Redwood's change of tone. "You cannot be too much on your guard; every step you take is important to your future happiness; and I think it my duty to warn you that, unless you crush the influence of the Walpole family *now*, on your first assumption of your rights, you have every thing to fear from their ascendancy. Between ourselves, my dear Julia,"—lowering his voice to a still more confidential pitch, "the old grandmother is the most imperious woman in existence, and her daughter Martha the most artful and insinuating. During Lady Redwood's lifetime" (Julia shrank within herself at the name) "they did not suffer Sir Alan to say his soul was his own; and had he remained in England, I very much doubt whether he ever would have ventured to contract a second marriage."

"Perhaps," faltered his niece, growing paler and paler, more and more depressed, "perhaps it was to escape the thralldom of the Walpole family that Sir Alan visited Italy?"

"Many people thought so," rejoined old

Trevanion, rejoiced to perceive that he had gradually subdued his sprightly niece into a proper frame of mind. "But take my advice, Julia. Resist from the first the innovations of these people. Show them that you are determined to be mistress of your own house, and to retain the superintendence of your family; and by exercising your firmness in the maintenance of your rights, and your fortitude in the endurance of their persecutions, you may perhaps have less cause than at present, alas! I have reason to anticipate—for deploring the day you were ever tempted to give your hand to a widower."

The "widower" was just then too close at hand to admit of a rejoinder on the part of his wife. Wearied out in patience by Mrs. Trevanion's tediousness, and the monosyllabic interjections of her two serious friends, he came to remind his wife that the carriage was waiting; and great indeed, was his surprise, instead of being greeted with the endearing smile he was ever in the habit of receiving, to find her looks haggard, her words incoherent, her whole demeanour changed. She suffered him to put

on her shawl and reiterate her adieu to her uncle and aunt, without appearing to recognize his presence : and from Mr. Trevanion's door to that of the Hotel in Jermyn-street, not a syllable passed between them. Julia was silently weeping in the corner of the carriage ; and Sir Alan conjecturing, in gloomy abstraction, what mysterious communication or remonstrance on the part of her uncle had produced so remarkable a transition in the mood and manners of his bride.

CHAPTER VII.

Love was a lambent flame that play'd about her breast,
Light as the vapours of a morning dream ;
So cold herself, while she such warmth express'd,
'Twas Cupid bathing in Diana's stream. DRYDEN.

THERE is no one, perhaps, more to be envied in this world, than a youthful bride arriving at the beautiful country seat which is to be the home of her future life, the scene of her long career of prosperity, the birthplace of her children, the shelter of her declining years :—unless, indeed, it be the happy individual on whose arm she contemplates its beauties, and to whose preference she is indebted for its possession. Often during their courtship, and still oftener during their bridal journey, had Redwood pictured to the delighted Julia the fine features and pic-

turesque associations of Farminghurst Castle;—had described the solemn grandeur of its woods,—the extent of its sea view,—the variety of its wild and rocky glens. Curiosity had long heightened the interest with which she regarded a spot, the scene of her husband's infancy and childhood; and frequently had her dreams forestalled the moments of her arrival there, till she woke with her heart beating in imaginary excitement.

Since her arrival in England, these feelings had redoubled. Farminghurst was the spot appointed for her re-union with her parents, from whom she was now, for the first time, separated; and she longed to be there;—to make arrangements for their reception;—to see the race of people among whom her destinies were appointed;—to tear a leaf, if possible, from the book of futurity.

“In this world,” says Rochefoucault, “our warmest wishes are seldom fulfilled; or they come to pass in a way, or at a moment, which robs them of half their charm.” Unfortunately for the bride of Sir Alan Redwood, the happy

hour of her arrival at her princely residence, did not occur till after her interview with the Walpoles and her martyrdom to the interference of uncle Trevanion. Even had he refrained from pointing out to her observation the alarming austerity of little Mary's family, she might, perhaps, have experienced some degree of apprehension on her first introduction to the nearest relation of her predecessor; but, aided by Mr. Trevanion's notes explanatory, she shuddered at the rigid formality of grandmamma's plaited lawn kerchief and powdered toupee; and could scarcely find voice to answer Miss Walpole's interrogations respecting her travels, given in a tone of dry catechismal regularity savouring awfully of the school-room.

So much, indeed, was the gentle Julia overawed by all she saw and all she conjectured of the Walpole family, that she took refuge, according to the custom of timid people, in an air of hauteur, and a tone of most repulsive coldness. Nothing could be more mortifying to Sir Alan Redwood than the constrained manner with which his Julia replied to the old lady's

communications respecting little Mary's health and disposition. Lady Redwood, forewarned by her uncle, saw clearly through the assumed amiability with which the grandmamma was attempting to conciliate her confidence and secure her subjugation. But she was determined *not* to be caught, —*not* to be captivated; and instead of taking her little step-daughter on her knee, as she would have done almost any other child as pretty and graceful, and stifling her with kisses as her strong resemblance to her father naturally prompted,—she scarcely deigned to notice her; and concurred with the most ungracious alacrity in Miss Walpole's proposal that Mary should return to Weymouth, and reside with them another year. It was evident that this plan afforded as much satisfaction to the stepmother as to the aunt; but amid all Martha Walpole's delight at the notion of retaining for some time longer the superintendence of her motherless niece, it was plain to the mortified Sir Alan, that she had already conceived the greatest contempt for Lady Redwood's pride and heartlessness. He

took little Mary into his arms, and strove to conceal his vexation of spirit by the warmth of his caresses : and Julia's reserve did but increase when she noted this excess of tenderness. The mortified father was no less indignant than afflicted. How could he conjecture that, after her careless dismissal of his child, poor Julia retired into her own room, to weep over the violence she had done her kind and tender feelings ; or that her heart was beating with agitation throughout the two formal interviews, in which she deported herself so arrogantly towards the family of his first wife.

Their feelings thus mutually estranged, it is not wonderful that the Yorkshire journey should be silent and cheerless. Sir Alan felt himself aggrieved, while Lady Redwood was of opinion that nothing but the most prudent management would preserve her from approaching martyrdom. *She* was constantly on the watch to circumvent the consequences of her husband's recent interview with her enemy, and to defeat the influence of the Walpole family ; while *he*, attributing the strangeness of her manner to

caprice, redoubled her uneasiness by his resentful abstraction.

Such was the mood in which the bride and bridegroom arrived at Farminghurst; such the temper of mind which imparted to Julia's beautiful features an expression of sullen melancholy striking consternation into the old servants and chief tenants, and dependants, who were waiting in the hall and courtyard to welcome her arrival.

If the haste with which she passed through the crowd and hurried into the saloon, prevented her from hearing the universal but involuntary ejaculation, "Ah! how unlike my late lady!"—the feeling by which the phrase was dictated was too apparent in the countenances of her attendants to escape observation. Instead of the pleased alacrity which flies to do the bidding of a cherished mistress, there was an air of unconcern in the comings and goings of the domestics; and in answering the few trifling inquiries she addressed to them, Lady Redwood saw that their looks were invariably directed towards their master, as if *her* approval were of no account.

But all this was of very secondary moment. From the time of changing horses at the last stage, where the extreme obsequiousness of landlord, landlady, waiters, ostlers, little dogs and all, sufficed to prove that they were approaching the confines of home, Sir Alan had sunk into the corner of the carriage in the most mournful reverie. Instead of pointing out to her, as she had hoped and expected, his favourite spots, his peculiar haunts, naming such and such a wood, tracing the course of the river, and acquainting her beside which group of distant poplars the Redwood Mills,—and behind which jutting rock the village church lay niched in snug concealment, — his eyes wandered vaguely over the wide landscape—the hedges flew by unheeded—the turnings of the road brought new varieties of hill and dale before them,—but the bridegroom uttered not a word ! His mind was evidently absorbed in the past ; “ Mary ” was doubtless again by his side !—and those

Love-storied trees and passion-plighted spots

were bringing back the tender remembrances, the hallowed regrets, which he had fled to Italy to obliterate. She ventured to steal a glance towards him, and saw that his eyes were filled with tears. How difficult she found it to restrain her own!—how dispiriting, how bitter was the sense of her own insignificance in his eyes,—of her own insufficiency to his happiness!

Arrived at home, the evil did but increase. Not a chamber,—not a piece of furniture but was evidently fertile in associations agonizing to his feelings. Instead of replying to her questions respecting one or two noble specimens of old masters with which the walls of the apartment were adorned, he retired to a distant window, and gazing stedfastly on the prospect, seemed determined to conceal his countenance from her scrutiny. Her first thought was to quit the room, and retire to the one appointed for her use; but she was prevented by the fear of seeming too much at home, or wishing to forestal his arrangements. She did not like to inquire of the housekeeper the way to her own apartment, till Redwood had expressed his

choice and intentions, either privately or publicly. Perhaps, in ignorance or malice, the old woman might point out the identical chamber he had inhabited with his first wife ;—her bridal chamber, — her death-bed. Perhaps, if the choice were referred to herself, *she*, unconsciously might fix her preference on the self-same room. And then, how terrible would it be to hear from the lips of Sir Alan, for the first time, the name of his deceased wife !—Supposing he should say to her,—“ No ! not *there* ;—do not choose that chamber ;—it was Mary’s ;—*it was my wife’s !* ”

But no sooner did Sir Alan recover his self-possession sufficiently to quit his post and turn towards his lady, than he was struck by the paleness of her face.

“ Are you ill, dearest Julia ? ” he inquired, hastening towards her ; all his tenderness returning at the sight of her troubled countenance. “ Has the journey been too much for you ? ”

“ I am indeed greatly fatigued,” said she, recovering some portion of her bloom, as a guilty blush overspread her cheeks, in terror that

Sir Alan should surmise the origin of her uneasiness.

“Will you lie down on the sofa till dinner time?—Or would you like to come at once to your own room?”—

“At once to my own room,” faintly articulated Lady Redwood. “But do not let me trouble you; I dare say Sterling can show me the way.”

“No!” replied Sir Alan, proudly, almost sternly, “do not deny me the pleasure of conducting you thither myself. It is a happiness I have long and eagerly anticipated.”

With the air of a culprit, Julia accordingly accepted the arm tendered to her support. But as she slowly ascended the grand staircase by the side of her husband, the whole scene seemed to swim before her eyes. Instead of noticing the fine bronzes decorating the hall, or the magnificent vases of Sèvres and Mandarin China placed at intervals along the galleries, her thoughts were engrossed by the consideration,—“Will he take me to his old room,—to *her* room?—Does every thing remain there

as in *her* time?—Should any trifling object belonging to *her* meet his eye, will his feelings be overcome by the sight;—and will he visit upon *me* his consciousness of infidelity to her memory? ”—

Nor were her terrors wholly groundless. There is not a spot in the wide world where the force of custom is so powerful as in an old-fashioned English country-house. Routine reigns there with its most despotic rule. In the household of the genuine squire, it is held as impossible to breakfast elsewhere than in the breakfast-parlour, to dine in any other than the dining-room, or hang a hat in any other place than the hall, as it would appear to an official man to transact colonial business at the Home Office, or arrange some diplomatic difficulty by reference to the Board of Control. The Baronets of Redwood, for the last four generations, had appropriated to themselves a certain suite called the North Rooms, consisting of an ante-room, bed-chamber, and two dressing-rooms; and it would have seemed quite as extravagant to Mrs. Haynes, the housekeeper, for

the master of the house to inhabit any other portion of it, as that he should build a nest among the jackdaws in the parish steeple. Sir Alan, in writing down to the Castle that Lady Redwood and himself might be expected on such a day, had desired, indeed, explicitly that the Chintz-room might be aired ; but as he limited his communication to this solitary order, Mrs. Haynes naturally concluded that some member of the “new lady’s” family would accompany them, to whose use it was destined ; and had been careful to direct the footman to carry my lady’s trunks and imperials to the North-room, and to induct my lady’s maid, Mrs. Sterling, into the same locality.

When Sir Alan accordingly threw open the pretty airy chamber he had selected for his wife, nothing was visible but the noble prospects from the windows, the lofty chintz bed, and the snowy muslin toilet-table. There were no packages,—no dressing-boxes,—no Mrs. Sterling ; and the truth instantly flashed on his mind. He started with an involuntary shudder at the idea of the annoyance he had escaped by

offering himself as Lady Redwood's conductor. The movement did not escape her. Nothing could be plainer than his agitation; and she was now convinced that "Mary" had actually breathed her last in the lofty chintz bed,—had directed her dying eyes to that beautiful landscape,—and taken her last look of her own faded countenance in that very tiring mirror! It was well for her that Sir Alan hastily quitted the room to give orders for the removal of her baggage to her new apartment, or her perturbation could not have passed unnoticed.

CHAPTER VIII.

Oh ! noble Love !

That thou couldst be without this jealousy,
Without this passion of the heart,—how lovely
Wouldst thou appear !

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

LADY REDWOOD had now been two months a wife. Her bridal awkwardness had in some measure worn off; and she was now familiarized to the custom of sitting at the head of the table, and undergoing all the formal ceremonial of dinner.

But on entering the magnificent eating-room at Farminghurst Castle, a new source of embarrassment overcame all her self-possession. It was not the sight of the magnificent family pictures, the Barons Redwood by Holbein and Zuccherò, and Baronets by Vandyke, Lely,

Kneller, and Reynolds ;—it was not the gorgeous beauty of Venetia Lady Redwood, from the pencil of Gervas ; or of Selina Lady Redwood, from the hand of Hoppner, that suspended her footsteps on the threshold ;—it was, that she was about herself to assume the post of *Mary Lady Redwood*—it was that she was about to occupy, directly in the eyes of Sir Alan, the place and station filled by his late wife ! As she advanced towards the board spread with costly plate, and a dinner of the most *recherché* kind, she almost expected to find “the table full ;” to see her predecessor, pale and menacing as the ghost of Banquo, arise and “push her from her stool !” Sir Alan saw her hesitation ; but, not understanding its motive, said and did nothing to assist her.

“This long table looks tremendously formal,” faltered Julia, flushing scarlet, with the effort she made to speak. “Will you allow me to have my chair placed nearer to you ?—I think I should like to act company to-day, and sit at your right hand.”

“Willingly, willingly,” cried Sir Alan, for a

moment pleased by a proposal that seemed to spring from the desire of being near him. "Mansel ! place Lady Redwood's chair here." And he looked smilingly upon her, and would have extended his hand to welcome her to her new seat, but that he was restrained by the attendance of two or three inquisitive servants. He had not, however, finished his soup before his views of the case were entirely altered. He now conjectured that the beautiful Julia disdained to preside over his household board ; that she despised the common-place regularity of his old-fashioned mansion ; that she was determined to play the fine lady from the beginning, by a refusal to comply with even the most ordinary forms of matronly duty. How often had he heard the equanimity of her temper set forth by the encomiums of her doating parents ! How often had Mr. Trevelyan assured him that, from the hour of her birth to that which saw her at the altar, she had never given them a single moment's uneasiness ; never frustrated their will ; never thought or acted but at the suggestion of those in authority over her ! Alas, poor

man !—he had been but eight weeks a husband, and already Lady Redwood had contrived to wound his feelings, mortify his pride, disturb his prejudices, traverse the customs of his house, and alienate his child from his roof. This was his gentle, sweet, submissive bride ; this was the lovely being who, for six months of careful deliberation, he had watched, examined, probed, assayed, in selfish anxiety to secure himself from an ill-assorted marriage—an unquiet home !

Vexatious, indeed, was that first evening passed at the Castle !—Julia sat apart with swelling bosom and gloomy countenance ; framing within herself a thousand wild conjectures—a thousand mournful forebodings ;—while Sir Alan, seated in his arm-chair, bent his head over a book, to conceal his distemperature of spirits and countenance. Lady Redwood attributed all this discomposure to the lingering influence of his first wife. But she was mistaken : it was the second only—it was *herself*—who was the cause of his uneasiness.

It is not to be supposed that a friend so highly esteemed as the worthy Maria Wilmot, had been

neglected by her pupil on occasion of the brilliant marriage which had crowned the destinies moulded under her auspices. Many a querulous letter had been despatched from Rome to Devizes, during poor Julia's season of tender disquietude; and when the auspicious moment of proposal and acceptance came at last, her kind preceptress was the first and only person to whom the lovely heiress addressed a confession of her triumph.

"I know you will be satisfied with my prospects," wrote poor Julia, "I am persuaded that even you, so indifferent to the value of worldly things, will admit me to be a very fortunate, and likely to be a very happy woman. Sir Alan Redwood's principles are as severe as even you, my dear friend, could desire. I am not going to marry the flirty, frivolous man of fashion you have so often laughingly predicted to me. My chosen husband is fonder of solitude than society, —of the country than town,—of books than men, —of study than pleasure. We shall forget the world in each other's sole society, and spend the greater portion of our lives at Farminghurst

and Trevelyan. I have not a hope or a wish ungratified,—unless that I may have virtue to support as I ought, so unmerited an influx of prosperity.”

To this effusion of girlish ecstasy, Miss Wilmot replied more after the manner of the governess than of the woman of the world. Instead of perceiving that Julia, flattered into a goddess, was inaccessible to vulgar arguments of mortal policy, or lessons of divine wisdom, she wrote to remonstrate with her young friend's too confident elation of spirits,—to remind her of the instability of sublunary happiness. Uncle Trevanion might have been, perhaps, more prosy, but he could not have been more ill-judging; for Julia, apprehensive of provoking a further rebuke, refrained from all communication with her prudent admonitress.

Experience had not yet taught her how welcome is the refreshing verdure of the evergreen of friendship after the summer flowers of love have blossomed and died away! But no sooner was the sky overcast, no sooner did the occurrences of her London visit tend to remind Lady

Redwood that she was not alone exempted from the common cares of humanity, than her spirit yearned towards the kind and wise woman who had so often cheered her under the petty vexations arising from the over solicitude of her parents. It was not over solicitude from which she was *now* suffering, it was not the dread that Sir Alan should love her too tenderly for her comfort, that rendered her stay in Jermyn-street so uneasy—her journey to the North so tedious : and yet the present irritation had precisely the same effect as her transient Trevelyan Park fits of the sorrowfuls ;—for it made her eager for Miss Wilmot's assuaging pity, Miss Wilmot's cheering arguments, Miss Wilmot's mild philosophy. As she sat, on the evening of her arrival, with her eyes now intent on her husband's studies and now on the pattern of his carpet, she was revolving in what terms to address her old friend so as to obtain her counsel and commiseration, without rendering her too anxious, or inducing her to hasten the return from Italy of Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan,

and above all, without inferring an unkind feeling towards Sir Alan.

Unluckily, the evening was only too propitious to Julia's desponding frame of mind. Summer was already on the wane ; and the Autumn seemed inclined to look in upon the earth and remind it of stormy days to come. A high wind arose during dinner, which now howled desolately among the high old Gothic chimnies, and swept fearfully along the echoing corridors. Distant doors (the sound of which, at present unfamiliar to her, seemed ominous and awful) now and then clapt too with a startling noise. The very candles beside which Sir Alan Redwood sat reading, flared and fleckered with the gusts of wind that penetrated the old-fashioned oriel windows. Nothing could be more desolating than the sounds and sights around her.

At length, the butler entered with his tray of bed candlesticks, and an inquiry whether her ladyship chose supper ; and great indeed was the surprise of the old man to observe the bridegroom seated in his usual reading chair, tranquilly perusing a new number of the Quar-

terly Review; and the bride at the opposite side of the room with a work box open on the table near her, but evidently doing nothing and saying as little. “If this is new-fashioned honeymooning,” thought old Mansel (as he proceeded to inform the household that my lady did not eat supper, and that Mrs. Sterling was to go up to my lady’s room)—“give *me* the *old*. I never saw Sir Alan so down-hearted in my late lady’s time. Pray Heaven things may be going on right between the young people.”

According to Lady Redwood’s order, her own maid was now sauntering up the back staircase to await her in her dressing-room. But had not Julia been afraid of exciting Sir Alan’s surmises, she would certainly have desired Mrs. Sterling to attend on her at the drawing-room door to accompany her to her chamber. Between the dispiriting state of the weather and the train of reflections she had been pursuing, it was far from agreeable to her to think of crossing the great hall alone. But having lingered a considerable time in the hope her husband would

bear her company, she suddenly took up her candle and prepared to quit the room.

Sir Alan, who was seriously hurt and displeased, now raised his eyes from his book, with a cold inquiry, whether she could find her way ; and Julia's pride, doubly roused by his tone of indifference, naturally suggested an answer in the affirmative. With faltering steps she accordingly made her way along the dimly illuminated vestibules and passages, where the tall bronze statues seemed frowning at her from their niches as she passed. The grand staircase was painted in fresco with devices of some Roman triumph ; and casting a trembling glance upon its phalanxes, Lady Redwood could have almost persuaded herself that the eyes of the centurions glared out fiercely upon her. With hurried footsteps she hastened along the passage she had traversed before dinner on Sir Alan Redwood's arm ; but now, in her trepidation nothing was easier than to mistake the door of her own room, when with a trembling hand she flung open the one she fancied must belong to the chintz bed-chamber. She was mistaken. It was that of an

old fashioned apartment seldom used; and the first thing that greeted her was the funeral achievement of the late Lady Redwood, with its black bordering, and skull and cross bones; which had been taken down in expectation of her arrival, and put there to be out of the way!

With some difficulty Julia refrained from shrieking aloud as this ill-omened object met her view. But hastily withdrawing from the unlucky chamber, she called aloud for Mrs. Sterling, and in a minute the smart person of her attendant emerged from a door at the further end of the corridor; and, for a moment, Lady Redwood's nervous terrors were tranquilized.

One of the happy results of the strict system of Julia's education was a disinclination for familiarity with servants. She was not in the habit of conversing with her maid on any thing but the duties of her calling; and Mrs. Sterling would have been as much astonished at an idle question from the lips of her young mistress, as from those of one of the statues in the hall. Nevertheless, on the present occasion Lady Red-

wood would have given worlds for courage to hazard a single sentence with her attendant. But she was still so young,—so timid,—so apprehensive of provoking impertinent criticisms, that the words expired on her lips as she attempted to frame an inquiry whether the chamber appropriated to her use was in truth that of her predecessor. Mrs. Sterling, meanwhile, catching a few words, managed, to confirm her suspicions. “The housekeeper had orders from Sir Alan,” she said, “that every thing should be exactly as it was in her *late lady’s* time;” and the long process of brushing and curling the *present lady’s* beautiful chesnut hair, and of folding and laying aside the present lady’s silken robes, being at length completed, the waiting-woman, tired by her day’s journey, hastened to light the night-lamp, draw the bed curtains, and inquire at what hour Lady Redwood would please to be called on the following morning;—adding that “her late ladyship always breakfasted with Sir Alan, in the study, at nine o’clock.”

Julia knew not what she answered. She was

wondering what construction Sterling would put upon her conduct, should she desire her to stay till her master made his appearance. But while still framing the terms of the request so as to make it appear as unimportant as possible, the sleepy woman glided out of the room, and the sleepless one was left alone.—*Alone!*

The wind howled; a wailing voice seemed mingled with its whistling gusts; and the flame of the veilleuse was bowed almost into darkness, as they swept to and fro over its crystal vase. Lady Redwood had listened and listened, for the retiring footsteps of her maid,—but all was now silent;—she heard nothing but the panting of her own breath, as she lay half hidden among her downy pillows. Perhaps Redwood might be already in his dressing-room?—and why should she patiently endure the perturbation by which she was oppressed, when a slight effort of courage would bring her into his presence?—She abjured her pride,—she forgot her pique;—she determined (whatever construction he might place on the proceeding) to make her way into his room. Stealing from the bed

without pausing to throw on her dressing-gown but hastily inserting her feet in her silken slippers, she seized the veilleuse ; and opening the door of her own dressing-room, which divided that of Sir Alan from the bedchamber, was about to traverse it, when an irresistible impulse induced her to shrink back and close the door. There is something in the aspect of a large, dark, deserted, unfamiliar chamber, dimly lighted by a lamp, very uninviting to a person of weak nerves. The thought struck her that even there the late Lady Redwood had probably lain in solemn preparation for the grave ;—that there—in that room, which she must have often crossed in the happy familiarity of matronly affection to consult with her husband,—in that very room the trappings of her funeral array had probably darkened the cheerful hangings and displaced the gay furniture.

“This is childish,—this is degrading !” faltered poor Julia, as the moisture rose on her brow ; and she sat down on the nearest chair with the veilleuse in her hand, in hopes to regain her strength and courage. “A moment’s

space would suffice to convey me to dear Redwood's presence. In *his* arms I should forget all these foolish fears. I *will* cross the dressing-room.—What is there to alarm me?"

Again she listened;—again the wind howled fearfully in the corridor. Nay, its voice seemed breathing with a peculiarly melancholy inflection from the very bed she had just quitted.—Its long curtains carefully drawn around, now seemed to exclude her; or rather, to conceal some unseen and mysterious occupant. "It was *there* she used to lie;—it was *there* her expiring breath called upon Redwood's name;—perhaps adjuring him to be faithful to her memory,—perhaps,—I cannot—cannot stay here; I will go to him," sobbed the agonized Julia; and again throwing open the door of the dressing-room, with the ordinary impression of nervous persons that something was pursuing her which she dared not turn round and confront, she crept across the shadowy apartment.

But, lo! scarcely had she attained half the way, when the opposite door opened slowly, and

a tall white figure, partly enveloped in a black drapery, stood before her. She saw not the face of the spectre ; but with one long piercing shriek, fell insensible on the floor !

CHAPTER VIII.

Stay illusion !

If thou hast any sound or use of voice,
Speak to me !

If there be any good thing to be done
That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,
Speak to me !

HAMLET.

It is an unlucky circumstance, inseparable from the forms of civilized life, that domestic catastrophes can no longer take place without the intervention of servants ; by whose voluminous reporting, cases of squabbles between my lord and my lady at the dinner the breakfast or the supper table,—during an airing in the britschka, or a row on the lake,—are sure to find their way all over the country. Sir Alan Redwood's first impulse on finding his Julia cold and breathless on the floor of her dressing-room, was to ring violently for the assistance of

her maid ; and both Mrs. Sterling, and the housekeeper, and even old Mansel, contrived to make their appearance on the scene in time to see her lying insensible on the sofa, with “ master ” bending over her, as well as to hear the first incoherent expressions of her returning conscientiousness. “ Redwood, Redwood, why did you bring me hither ?—Why expose me to this horrible visitation ? ”—It was necessarily settled in the steward’s room the following morning, that “ my lady had *seen something* ! ”

“ My lady’s ” popularity in her new household, which had already assumed a very doubtful aspect, was now at an end. “ If their poor dear first lady could not rest in her grave because of Sir Alan’s giving such a stepmother to poor dear little Miss Mary, the case must be very bad indeed ! ” The under-housemaid protested “ *she* would not stand in my lady’s shoes, not for the vally of all the ’state of Farminghurst Castle ; ” and one very nervous laundry-maid, much addicted to novels and green tea, actually resigned office, and went to wring wet linen and her own hands in some less ghostly establishment.

The first thing accordingly that transpired of the new Lady Redwood in the neighbouring town of Farmington, was that the castle became haunted from the moment she set foot in it; and that she was a proud, arrogant, hoity-toity woman, who would not so much as sit at the head of her husband's table! Rumours, like clouds, gather as they go. The children belonging to the late Lady Redwood's various village schools, having imperfectly caught the general tenour of the reports gossipped over beside the cottage hearths, mistaking the effect for the cause, insisted that the new lady herself was the spectral apparition; and the first time poor Julia, recovering from her temporary indisposition, drove down to the village in the pony-cart with her husband, a general consternation seemed to seize the little congregation drawn out for her inspection. Instead of receiving with joyful gratitude the largesse bestowed upon them by their new patroness,—instead of looking with admiration on her snowy robes and beautiful face, the trembling urchins held together by the hand with looks of terror and

aversion, and regarded her benefaction as "fairy money," likely to bring misfortunes on the possessor.

Tears came into Lady Redwood's eyes as she quitted the school-house. She could not blind herself to the ungracious mode of her reception,—to the stern glances bent on her by the schoolmistress,—to the loathing looks of the poor children. "I see how it is," thought she, as the pony-chaise jolted along a beautiful green lane, matted with hazel bushes and fragrant with honeysuckle; "they were too long the objects of the first Lady Redwood's bounty to look on *me* without disgust. They regard me as an interloper;—I will never go among them again."—

"I trust, dearest Julia," whispered Sir Alan, pleased to see the old people totter to the doors of the several cottages to make an obeisance to his beautiful bride, "I trust you will find an interesting source of occupation in promoting the welfare of these poor creatures. I have been accustomed to regard them as a charge committed to my guardianship. I am sure you

will aid me in the discharge of so sacred a duty ;
—I am sure you will visit and comfort them ?” —

“ *I have been accustomed* ” sounded in the ears of poor Lady Redwood very like “ Mary and I were accustomed.” Her heart, which was aching before, rebelled against the instigation. “ I can trust to Sterling,” said she, “ to be my delegate. Papa never liked me to go into the cottages at Trevelyan ; he fancied my health might suffer.”

Stung to the heart by her cold selfishness, Sir Alan unconsciously administered a sharp cut of the whip to the little Shetland he was driving. Hard-heartedness in a woman is a hideous thing ;—hard-heartedness in a wife is a revolting one ;—hard-heartedness in Julia—the beauty, the heiress, the favoured of Heaven—a crying sin ! He might perhaps have been tempted to give vent to his feelings, but that they were now entering the vicarage-lane ; and that a low paling, surmounted by a wall of Portugal laurel, dominated by six tall steeples of poplar trees, ancient and stalwart and mossy, soon proclaimed them to have arrived at their destina-

tion. Although she had set out with the intention of a bridal visit to Dr. and Mrs. Hobart, the vicar and vicaress of Farmington, Lady Redwood would now have willingly declined the exertion; but on mentioning to Sir Alan that she was suffering from an excruciating head-ache, his hasty reply demonstrated that the vicarage visit was inevitable. Remembering the brilliant bloom with which she had made her appearance at the breakfast-table, and unaware of the painful impressions she had been imbibing at the school-house, he did not hesitate to attribute her plea to caprice or affectation. She wanted to play the fine lady to Mrs. Hobart, or the despot to himself. Resistance was useless; Julia, mildly submitting to his decree, soon found herself stepping from the chaise under a porch covered with a profusion of the sweet scented clematis.

Having reached the parlour, a small compact wooden figure, in a slate coloured gown, rose, curtsied, and pointed to a very severe looking armchair; and poor Lady Redwood found that her husband's announcement of Mrs. Hobart's cold

formality of address had not been overcharged. After two minute's silence, broken by a polite inquiry from Sir Alan after "his friend Hobart," the figure rose again, and rang the bell; when the footboy who had ushered them in having made his re-appearance and ducked his head to his silent mistress by means of a tug inflicted on the central lock of a shaggy red mane, she desired him to step to the vestry, and let the Doctor know Sir Alan and my Lady were there.

"You seem to have a very pretty garden?" said Lady Redwood, in a conciliating tone.

"The Doctor is fond of flowers, and takes pleasure in cultivating it."

"It strikes me that the finest flowers are generally to be found in old-fashioned gardens. Do you not think that stocks, and cabbage-roses, and honey-suckles are generally far more beautiful in old farmhouses than in the choicest nursery grounds?"

Mrs. Hobart was affronted. "The Doctor gets his plants and seeds from the first florist in the county."

"I saw you, Mrs. Hobart, at a distance, when

we drove into the village," said Sir Alan. "I conclude you were frightened in by the overclouding of the weather?"

"The Doctor told me before he went out that it would not rain; so I was under no such apprehension."

"Hobart is, I know, an infallible weather glass;" replied the patron; "thanks, I fear, to his rheumatism. Ah! here he comes!"

Lady Redwood's hopes that the entrée of the Vicar would serve to animate the scene, were very speedily undeceived. Mrs. Hobart, who was but the sympathetic reflection of a human being and destitute of an idea of her own, could no longer quote the Doctor when he was actually in presence; and as to Hobart himself, he was precisely the man to inflict martyrdom on poor Julia.

The Vicar of Farmington was an interpreter of minikin mysteries,—a prophet on a small scale,—a diamond edition of Albertus Magnus,—a duodecimo Roger Bacon,—a miniature Faust,—a nimini-pimini Galileo; dabbled in chemistry; passed for an antiquary with the

maiden ladies of the neighbourhood ;—was the proprietor of half a dozen black letter editions ;—corresponded with the Gentleman's Magazine ;—and, in the course of a second glass of negus, had been known to hint himself as the Philanthropos of the Statesman newspaper.—Generally speaking, an individual of this sort of universal genius, is a man of words ; but Hobart was intrinsically and exclusively a man of letters. Suspicious perhaps (for the most arrogant pretenders have often a tolerable insight into their real value) that his sayings were of very small account in the ears of mankind, he strove to increase their importance—as the Dutch planters augment the price of their spices, by clearing the market with a bonfire—by rendering them not only few and far between, but by giving utterance to his oracles in an unintelligible whisper. He would not inquire of one of his tithepaying farmers after the health of his cart-horse without taking him aside for so interesting an investigation ;—was always to be found whispering in a window seat at the squirearchical dinners of the parish ;—and shook his head with

as much mysterious emphasis while bargaining in a corner for some old higgler's new laid eggs, as would have procured him considerable deference at a visitation dinner of the diocese.

But if so mysterious the course of his intercourse with the every day world, what was the extent of his empty solemnity in his communication with his patron!—In presence of Sir Alan, his aspect grew as hieroglyphical as the Pyramids;—his face was “a mystery” without being a “beauty;”—his discourse all periphrasis;—his “nods and winks” were pregnant with emphasis and implication; and as to his “wreathed smiles,” not a simper of them but contained a judicial verdict!—Not a word did the Doctor utter, but “denoted a foregone conclusion;” his dissertations (without a key) were as incomprehensible as a fashionable novel; and his allusions to “certain persons,”—and “certain events,”—and “one who shall be nameless,” and “a mutual friend of ours whom it is needless to specify,” would have defied the exposition of Messieurs Boswell, Croker, or Thomas Hill.

His ko-tou to the bride reverentially but si-

lently performed, Dr. Hobart commenced an inquiry, partly by signs and symbols, and partly by word of mouth, "whether Sir Alan had received his letter of the 21st instant, relative to an interesting occurrence;—and whether he might consider himself justified in the inferences he had formed on the occasion, relative to his patron's wishes on a certain head?"—

Redwood, albeit well-used to the Vicar's tendency to monster his own nothings, and those of other people, could scarcely refrain from a smile as he proceeded to invest his reply to the question in the plain English of "Yes, my dear Doctor; and I have no doubt Lady Redwood will like green baize hassocks quite as well as red;" but Hobart was not to be defrauded of his opportunity. It might suit the proprietor of Farminghurst Castle to admit *his* "woman-kind" into the cabinet council; but the proprietor of Farmington Vicarage knew better. He was well aware by what means *he* had succeeded in enshrining himself as a divinity,—a Magnus Apollo,—a Socrates in a surplice,—in the eyes of his little Dutch doll of a wife;—and had no

mind to rend in her presence, the vail of his Temple of Mystery.

Laying violent hands on the button of the Baronet, he accordingly drew him into the furthest window,—placed him with his back to the ladies,—and left nothing visible to the anxious Julia but his own self-important face—creaming and mantling like the standing pool, and foreshowing the nature of a tragic volume.

What could they be talking about? What could the Doctor be saying to Sir Alan in that sympathizing tone, that deprecating whisper, which required the enforcement of so much shaking of his well-powdered head, so much wagging of his forefinger, so many furtive glances towards herself, to ascertain that she was not listening;—so many whispered but audible injunctions to the Baronet to speak lower;—to remember that they were not alone?—Now and then, an italicized word reached her ears through the measured drone of Mr. Hobart's wishy-washy conversation; such as, “poor thing;”—“the feelings of a woman so circumstanced;”—“a voice addressing us from the grave;” and

without the least suspecting that the mystery enveloped a communication from Hobart, as vicar, to Redwood, as magistrate, concerning a peccadillo of one of the female parishioners of the former, who was expiating the laxity of her morals on the treadmill upon six ounces of bread per diem, she referred every interjection, every sigh, and every grimace, to some direful circumstance connected with his former patroness.

“I will step up to the Castle, and have a few minutes’ private conversation with you on the subject,” was the Doctor’s concluding sentence, when Sir Alan, to the imminent peril of his button, at length tore himself from the window seat.

“Do, Doctor,” said Redwood, enchanted to have procured even a short respite. “You will always find me open to your arguments;—but the less I hear on this painful subject the better. *It is now too late.*”

“*Too late!*”—Poor Julia.

The visit was soon at an end; but not so the

increased and increasing distress arising to Lady Redwood from Dr. Hobart's diplomatic tone and impressive pantomime. Although Sir Alan was keenly alive to his Vicar's foible, he respected him too much as a good man to hold him up to ridicule for not being a wise one; and instead of pointing out to Julia, or even admitting that he had not a grain of confidence in Doctor Hobart, nor the slightest inclination for the numberless private audiences insisted on by that worthy divine, he considered it his duty to maintain the importance of the Vicar of Farmington, in the eyes of his household, by indulging those little innocent vagaries of his self-importance which did no harm to either of them. Whenever the man of mystery visited the Castle, Sir Alan either withdrew with him to the library, or talked with him in mysterious whispers at the furthest extremity of the room; and it was really no great stretch of Lady Redwood's morbid sensibility to believe that weighty business was transacted between them, in which she was not suffered to participate; that they had

a secret in common of painful import and unequalled interest. Sometimes the name of Walpole transpired amid their whispers; and though it arose only from Dr. Hobart's inquiry after the old lady's rheumatism when she last wrote, Julia no longer doubted that the gentleman in black was in collusion with that dreaded family; and that, in all probability, he transmitted to Weymouth a regular diary of the proceedings at the Castle. And this was the individual with whom a large fraction of her country life would be passed:—this was the man who was to dine with her every Saturday,—exhort her every Sunday,—regulate her beneficence to the poor,—and her intercourse with those whose young ideas were being taught to shoot at her cost and care! Dr. and Mrs. Hobart, and a husband whose heart was wedded to the grave, were the companions destined to replace her doating parents, her discriminating friend Miss Wilmot. She almost longed to be back again on the once familiar gravel-walk at Trevelyan Park. Nay, she would have swallowed the bitterest concoction

devised by the malice of Buchan, only to feel her father's hand laid in benediction on her head, or her mother's clasped in yet tenderer endearment within her own !—

CHAPTER IX.

A goodly spot,
With lawns, and beds of flowers, and shades
Of trellice-work in long arcades,
And cirque and crescent, framed by wall
Of close-clipt foliage, green and tall,
Converging walks and fountains gay,
And terraces in trim array. WORDSWORTH.

It is very well for philosophers, who dry up their tears with the dust of mouldy libraries, to affect superiority to the ordinary vexations of life. But of what but petty cares and petty pleasures, is the grand sum total of destiny composed?—Heroes and heroines bear a small proportion to the mighty multitude of their fellow-creatures; and for one individual who perishes by the Brobdignagian sabre-cut, a thousand are exposed to Lilliputian warfare; *ten*

thousand doomed to the pin's-prick martyrdom of trivial afflictions.

Lady Redwood had youth, beauty, virtue, fortune—was blest in affectionate parents and a husband of her own selection. But it was clear that she was fated to be a miserable woman : a single clear petrifying drop was incessantly dripping upon her head and chilling her to stone. The beautiful park of Farminghurst attracted day by day a host of admiring visitors to expatiate on the majesty of its woods, the variety of its prospects ; but to the eye of the fair creature to whom they were as the dryad-haunt of daily life, they said nothing,—less than nothing :—her fancy was disenchanted,—the blight of disappointment was already on her young heart !—Without sister or brother or congenial spirit to exhaust the early impulses of her warm affections,—without romantic associations or romantic studies to exalt her imagination or bewilder her passions—Julia Trevelyan's feelings had flowed undeviatingly in the pure channel marked out by nature. She had loved her tiresome father and mother dutifully and

patiently;—she had prepared herself to love her highly-gifted husband passionately and exclusively. Was he not her chosen one, her own,—her only;—the companion of her mortal pilgrimage,—the partner of its crowning immortality?—

By how many chilling negatives were these and similar questions to be frozen into silence!—No! he was *not* hers!—never, never could be hers.—He belonged to his dead wife,—his living child,—to the whole tribe of Walpole,—to any and every one but *her*;—to the mysterious vicar, — the importunate bailiff, — to stewards, tenants, gamekeepers, and constables! Every human being at Farminghurst seemed to have a claim on his time, a title to his personal interest. Did he accompany his bride in a morning ride, every farmer who approached had his private tale to disclose, his petition to advance to his landlord, regardless of the value placed by the repining Julia on every word proceeding from Redwood's lips, every glance emanating from Redwood's eyes. Did she persuade him, on their return, to adjourn with her

to the library, and lavish the delightful hour of leisure preceding the dinner-bell on new books, old engravings, or passages from a favourite author shared in common,—the mysterious vicar was sure to drop in, with a face as secret as a despatch-box, to draw his patron to a distant window, and engage him in discourse, in which Sir Alan's air of absorbed attention plainly denoted his interest. In a moment he seemed to forget *her* presence, and to become indifferent to *her* embarrassment. Nay, she could not so much as reckon on an unmolested stroll with him through the beautiful shrubberies. Every minute the head gardener was at their side,—imploring instructions, demonstrating impossibilities, and courting praise from his master;—while Julia, instead of rewarding him with her approval, fairly wished him at the bottom of one of his much-vaunted melon pits.

Now had Lady Redwood been assured of possessing her husband's entire affection,—had she felt satisfied that, confer with whom he would,—debate with whom he must,—*she* was the one sole object to which inclination

would have directed his time and thoughts,—vicar, steward, bailiff, butler, down to the game-keeper's crop-eared terrier, might have shared his attention without exciting her uneasiness. She would have entered into all his solitudes,—all his pursuits;—nor envied a single whisper, nor been jealous of a single *ex parte* audience. But a woman whose mind is perplexed by doubts of her husband's attachment, sees mischief in every thing. She persuaded herself indeed that a husband of but two months standing, ought to feel as impatient as herself of Dr. Hobart's importunities,—as indifferent as her own heart to the fall of his timber and the rise of his underwood. If the vulgar cares of life were thus early to break in upon their intercourse, where was that blessed, that uninterrupted communion of wedded hearts, for which so many well-rhymed stanzas had bespoken her admiration;—on which “so much metre and much pains” have been from time immemorial thrown away. Oh! those poetical dreams of her youth!—those visions of the starry sky, the flowery vallies, and the quiet woods, enjoyed in sympathizing

loneliness with the man of her heart,—of her choice,—her better, her far more precious self! Was all to end in colloquies with the game-keeper about breaking a litter of setter-puppies,—or with a Scotch gardener about the best mode of cultivating the hundred-headed cabbage?—Here was an end for her romance;—here a commencement of the common-place realities of life!—Was it worth while to lavish the pure incense of her heart, that

Rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes,
on one who cared more for the mash about to be administered to his favourite mare, than for a walk with *her* by moonlight on the terrace?—and who preferred a debate with the Doctor touching the new tiling of the workhouse, to her own quotations from Byron and Mrs. Hemans? The thing was only too apparent!—Nothing but a heart whose energies were destroyed,—a mind whose polish was worn off by devotion to one pre-engrossing object, could be capable of such trifling, such paltry, such mercenary worldliness!—

It had been well for a woman thus misguided,

to have been united with a husband stationed somewhat higher, or somewhat lower, in the scale of human dignities; with one who possessed no delegates to require his superintendence, or a dignity too supreme to admit of contact with them. He was just planted on that round of fortune's ladder best calculated to add to the amount of her cares.

People who brood over their sorrows, are usually successful in hatching a numerous covey; and those who sit "nursing their rage to keep it warm," are sure of a comfortable temperature of indignation. Solitary meditation did but distort the medium through which Sir Alan Redwood's conduct was viewed by his wife; and at length, after a dialogue with herself of which the arguments were only too unanimous, she took a sudden resolution, about as discreet and judicious as all *sudden* resolutions of ladies of twenty-one, whether wives or maidens. "I will repress this glowing tenderness," said she. "I will meet his coldness with coldness. Since he can interest himself with tri-

fles, let *me* seek objects of interest equally trivial ; since *his* pursuits are of so absorbing a nature, let me create to myself amusement from a thousand neglected sources. I will resume my drawing, my etching,—all the occupations which afforded me so much gratification ere I became acquainted with Redwood. *He* gives his attention to the plantations and orchards,—*I* will busy myself in improving the flower garden ;—*he* puts his exclusive confidence in Dr. Hobart, *I* will make a friend (a friend !) of the Vicar's wife."

Of these intentions, the second was at once the easiest and pleasantest of execution. It possessed even the charm of novelty ; for notwithstanding Julia's rustic education and feminine passion for flowers, gardening was among Mr. Trevelyan's numerous interdictions, as a source of catarrhs and an enemy to the complexion. In her own old home, Julia had possessed a little square ugly nook called *her* garden ; duly dug and planted by the under gardener, and weeded by seven ragged boys from the park lodge. But she had never yet enjoyed the glorious privilege of planting,—uprooting,

--raising the rustic temple,—and destroying the obsolete grotto.

Now the gardens at Farminghurst were certainly as well calculated for improvement as Repton himself could have desired. There was a labyrinth of brick walls and lofty terraces, with balustrades and vases of stone;—a pleasaunce stuck with statues and yew-trees; and a Dutch garden, of which the sun-dial in the centre stood towering above the tulip and polyanthus beds, and vying in solitary grandeur with the column in the Place Vendome. All was surpassingly frightful; and as the genius of harmony was not likely to descend and whisper to its mistress that the whole was in curious and remarkable unison with the heavy gables and sixteenth century architecture of the castle, there seemed every probability that not so much as a pebble or a chrysanthemum would be left to prate of the whereabouts of its straight parterres and straighter gravel walks. But Julia had not sufficient ardour to become a ruthless invader; and instead of directing the force of her genius or of her authority to the demolition of the terraces and tulip

beds, she determined to choose a spot for her exertions where what was already charming might be rendered still more delightful.

Situated about half a mile from the house in one of the plantations (a rich shrubbery of evergreens leading from the old-fashioned pleasure to the ridge of hills forming the first landbreak towards the sea)—there was a beautiful platform of greensward fronting the western sun, and fenced round with an extensive belt of flowering shrubs. The spot was evidently not a favourite with its master; for whenever the course of their walks led them that way, he proposed returning to the house. Nay, once upon Julia's proposing that they should rest themselves there on a rustic seat placed under shelter of a spreading magnolia tree, he had frankly invited her to select some more cheerful spot. "Any part of the grounds rather than this," said he; leading her onwards through the closer dingles of the shrubberies.

This, therefore, was the place that naturally pointed itself out to Lady Redwood as propitious to her operations. Here she might work

in secret, secure from her husband's observation; here she might create for herself an interest, an occupation, a solitary haunt for her reveries,—a refuge from her desolation. It was an excellent field for the exercise of her taste;—sylvan, remote, grassy, shadowy;—with several fine cedars feathering down to the soft short turf; and dense masses of evergreen, that wanted only a skilful hand to break into picturesque groups. Nothing could be easier than to open a vista towards the sea, and add a beautiful landscape to the tranquil lonely stillness of the foreground. It was only to cut through the screen of shrubs, and the rustic pavilion (the *châlet*, for the erection of which her plans were already sketched) would command a magnificent prospect over the German Ocean!—Eager as a child for the realization of her scheme, the axe was soon at work; and in the course of a few days, the trunks of hemlock firs, stone pines, acacias, and tulip trees, which twenty years had coaxed into moderate growth, nay even the beautiful magnolia tree,—lay encumbering the lawn. Instead of their dull dim foliage, a beau-

tiful glimmer of the distant sea, with the lifelike variety of its chasing sails and changeful hues, gladdened the eyes of the delighted Julia!— Having caused the rustic bench, originally placed under shade of the branching magnolia, to be disencumbered of the withering shrubs scattered around, and stationed on the spot she had selected for the site of the *châlet*, Lady Redwood sat herself contentedly down to contemplate the beautiful landscape she seemed to have called into existence.

There is something peculiarly pleasing in the combination of movement and stillness inherent in every extensive prospect. The lofty platform, perched like a green nest on the edge of the hill, commanded a beautiful stretch of woodlands shelving to the sea. A thriving village stood on a detached acclivity to the eastward; the very movement of whose windmill with the measured swirl of its sails, served to animate the scene. The soft, nobly rounded tops of the oak trees below, formed a rich foreground; and at a distance (its dolphin-like tints varying with the reflection of the clouds sailing above) shone

the majestic ocean,—the mightiest moving impulse of the created earth.

It was a lovely scene,—a soothing spot. The humming of the insects among the branches, the distant call of the herd-boys gathering their cattle in the pastures, and now and then a blackbird waking up the mellow gurgle of its evening song, alone disturbed the deep tranquillity;—and as Julia sat drinking in the balmy breath of evening, rich with the fragrance of the crushed grass and the aromatic exhalations of the pine trees, her heart felt freshened and her spirits brightened. She seemed to rise superior to the petty cares by which she had suffered herself to become oppressed;—to rejoice in the beauty of the external frame of nature;—to recognize the beneficence of the mighty hand that spreads its gifts so bounteously around us, and still hovers over its works as if awaiting fresh occasion to beautify and bless!—She began to recognise with thankfulness the prosperity of her own situation. Her parents too would shortly arrive in England,—would soon be with her;—would sit with her on

that very spot;—and rejoice with her in the brightness of her destiny. Yes;—she felt that she was now happy, or on the point of becoming so;—that she should soon be as light-hearted as ever,—recover her spirits, her bloom, her——Alas ! what sudden spectacle caused the quick blood to mount into her cheeks ; and suspended this happy progress of thought and feeling?—What did she behold,—what hear—what apprehend,—to induce that air of consternation ? —

Never before had the approach of her husband produced so strange an emotion ! A rustling of the bushes having caused her to turn her head while summing up her vast amount of means of happiness, she was struck by the sight of Sir Alan standing motionless by her side ; his looks haggard,—his lips quivering,—his eyes sparkling with indignation !—

“ *Who* has done this ? ”—cried Redwood, pointing to the uprooted trees, and disordered turf. “ What accursed hand has dared to invade this sacred—sacred spot !—Rather had my right arm been cut off, than one branch of

yonder magnolia touched; rather had they taken my heart's blood, than presumed to lay their finger on a single blade of grass. It was hers!—Mary,—Mary,—*is* this the way in which I have kept my promise;—*is* this the guardianship I have exercised over your favourite haunt!"—He wrung his hands distractedly as he spoke, with many an abhorrent glance over the scene of devastation.

But Julia was now beyond reach of his adjurations. She could no longer hear his cruel words—no longer tremble under the terrible expression of his countenance—she lay cold and senseless at his feet.

CHAPTER X.

What tho' his other wife
Out of her most abundant soberness,
Forc'd him to blow as high as she, dos't follow
He must renew that long-since buried tempest
With this soft maid? THE TAMER TAMED.

It was scarcely a week after this distressing occurrence, that Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan arrived suddenly at the Castle. Loving their only child so tenderly, and with so sure a trust in her reciprocation of affection, they had taken it into their heads to make their appearance without previous announcement, in order to give her what they called an agreeable surprise. Clearer-sighted people would have been aware that surprises (excepting in a pantomime) are never agreeable. Lady Redwood, who knew not of their arrival in England and believed them still in Paris, was very ill prepared to

afford the welcome they expected. Recent indisposition imparted languor to her address and listlessness to her air; and there was no longer a single impulse of joy stirring in her bosom.

Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan had expected indeed to see her weep in the joy of seeing them again — had expected to weep themselves: — they were prepared for a general overflow of tears. But they did *not* expect the flood to be of long duration. Satisfied that the sunshine of Julia's sweet smiles would very soon re-irradiate the scene, the lively tones of her voice would again yield delight and gladness to their old hearts.

But they were disappointed! Lady Redwood, after the first burst of surprise and emotion, regained the statue-like paleness and immobility which were now becoming habitual to her. The tears dried in her eyes, but it was only to be succeeded by the glassy vacant stare of a half-alienated mind. The shriek of her amazement was momentary; but, instead of giving place to joyful tender expressions of welcome, a hoarse broken murmur seemed to have

usurped her former sweet intonation. Fortunately Sir Alan was absent—gone to fulfil his magisterial duties at the neighbouring town; or he would certainly have been apt to take offence at the involuntary exclamations of pity and regret with which the wondering parents contemplated their altered child;—the mortification expressed by old Trevelyan, that he had ever suffered her to encounter the searching atmosphere of Yorkshire, instead of her own soft breezes of the west;—and the hints thrown out by the poor mother, that her child was less happy and less cared-for than she expected to be!—On Julia's ear these insinuations fell innocuous. It was not what the world thought, it was not even what her parents thought, in disparagement of her condition, that constituted its shame or sorrow;—it was that, according to the pathetic phrase of the Boothby monument, “she had ventured her store of happiness in one frail bark, and that the wreck was total!” It had been her sole wish, her hope, her trust, to triumph in the exclusive affection of her husband;

and disappointed in that blessed aspiration, her after life was a blank.

“Tell me, Julia, my love,” inquired her mother, trying to engage her in general conversation, as they sat together after dinner in the vast comfortless saloon (which Lady Redwood wanted courage or energy to render more modernizedly habitable), “*who* presented you at the drawing-room?” —

“I did not go. The weather was oppressive; and Sir Alan was not particularly anxious on the subject.”

“You must have been languid from debility to suffer so much from the heat. I hope, my love, you saw Sir Henry Halford?” —

“No, indeed, Papa! Redwood was of opinion that the bracing air of Farminghurst would restore me; and you see,” she continued, faintly smiling, “that he has proved a true prophet.”

“Never saw you looking worse in your life!” cried old Trevelyan. “I wish to goodness I had brought down some sulphate of quinine.”

“And how did you like the Duchess of Wearmouth?” inquired his wife.

“I did not see her.”

“Not introduce you to his aunt the Duchess!” cried Mrs. Trevelyan with indignation.

“We had very little time to pay visits.”

“It was *her* business to visit *you* as a bride. And pray then, my dear Julia, which of the family *did* condescend to notice you when you were in town?”—

“The Walpoles came up for a day or two, to bring the little girl,” said Lady R., blushing deeply.

“The Walpoles!—*they* are the relatives of the late Lady Redwood. It was to his *own* connexions Sir Alan *ought* to have introduced his wife.”

“And *would*, had I desired it. But my chief object was to get into the country.”

“Probably he has not even presented you with the family jewels?—Have you your diamonds yet, Julia?”—

“I fancy they are at the banker’s. It would

have been absurd, you know, to bring them down here, where we see so little company."

"But *why* see so little company?—Your neighbourhood is a very good one, and your honeymoon over, I conclude, by this time?"

"Yes,—*quite over!*" responded Julia, sighing deeply.

"Then why not comply with the customs of society, and receive your neighbours as they ought to be received in a house like this?"—

"We have had but little leisure since we came here," replied Lady Redwood, unwilling to admit the want of harmony between herself and her husband, which would have rendered the presence of strangers so embarrassing. "But Sir Alan was saying yesterday, that as soon as the Walpoles came down to assist me in doing the honours, we ought to send out our invitations."

"The Walpoles again!" cried the old lady. "What have the Walpoles to do with *your* proceedings? Surely, my dear Julia, the customs of Trevelyan Park have qualified you

to preside over Farminghurst Castle, without the intervention of such people as the Walpoles?"—

“Sir Alan has a very high opinion of them.”

“Which need not induce him to depreciate his wife. It is time that things were put on a different footing,” said poor fussy Mrs. Trevelyan. “I shall take care that the claims of a child of mine——”

“My dear, dear mother!” interrupted Lady Redwood, clasping her arms round Mrs. Trevelyan, as she sat beside her on the sofa. “If you value my comfort, you will not interfere betwixt me and my husband. My happiness is just now hanging on a thread. Touch it with ever so delicate, so tender a hand, and it will snap asunder. You must not talk to Redwood of the Walpole family; you must not torment him about diamonds and drawing-rooms; you must not urge him into seeing more company at Farminghurst than suits his convenience. You must not; indeed you must not!—If you love me, you will promise to de-

sist from all these things.—You *do* love me;—you *will* promise?”—

“My dear child,” cried poor Mrs. Trevelyan visibly affected, “I was in hopes I should see and hear no more of these nervous tremors. You remind me, Julia, of those disagreeable moments at Rome, when you were still in doubt respecting Sir Alan’s attachment.”

“*Do* I remind you of those moments?” ejaculated Julia, withdrawing her arms. And she whispered to herself that even that period of suspense was preferable to her present certainty of his sentiments.

The old squire, meanwhile, having been absorbed in a deep reverie, fancied he had made a notable discovery. Ever ready to espy a physical cause for moral effects, it suddenly occurred to him that all his darling Julia’s chilliness, paleness, and nervous emotions, were attributable to the prospect of a little heir to Farminghurst Castle; and, vexed that he had said any thing to embarrass her, he now cut short the course of his lady’s catechism, and began to relate the adventures of their own

journey from Italy, for the amusement of his daughter; laughing at all the dull jests of his own narrative, and fancying it was Julia who diverted; and dwelling with considerable emphasis on certain situations and incidents which he found highly interesting, but which fell unheeded on the vacant ear of poor Lady Redwood.

The old gentleman's illusion could not last for ever; nor had he been twenty-four hours under the roof of his son-in-law, before a dispassionate review of his own and his wife's observations, conjectures, and apprehensions, aided by the hints and implications of Mrs. Trevelyan's maid, sufficed to convince him that his Julia was an unhappy woman—a neglected wife!

“What *shall* we do,—what *can* we do!” cried poor Mrs. Trevelyan, wringing her hands as she walked up and down her dressing-room, after a cabinet council with her husband. “In spite of all our care and caution, that our precious child should fall into the hands of a brute!”—

“ We have no evidence entitling us to use so harsh a term.”

“ What !—when you hear that the poor dear girl has twice been found senseless in his arms?”

“ She seems in a very weak state of health, poor dear ;—perhaps she wants tonics.”

“ And what has reduced her to a weak state of health?—She was always well enough and happy enough at Trevelyan Park. She was even well and happy in Italy, when this heartless man first intruded himself into our society. But I doubt whether she will *ever* be well or happy again. Ah ! my poor dear Julia !—little did she deserve to be visited with such a destiny !”—

“ Hush, my dear, hush !— You saw how anxious the poor child was that we should be cautious in meddling with her domestic affairs.”

“ And yet you affect to doubt that her husband is unkind !—What but actual, positive, and most severe unkindness could terrify her to such a degree?—Ah, Mr. Trevelyan ! the case is only too plain ;—I am convinced he uses her like a dog.”

“ Well, don’t convince *me* so, if you can help it; for were it once proved, he should die the death of one, if ever Providence put strength into a father’s arm!—But what chance have we of obtaining her confidence? ”—

“ Sir Alan will be here to-morrow. You must point out to him, without warning Julia of your intention, that her health requires a milder atmosphere; and ask his permission to take her back with us to Trevelyan Park.”

“ Will she ever find courage to second the proposal? ”

“ We must place the necessity of the case in so strong a point of view as to leave him no alternative.”

“ At worst, I can but end (where I would fain begin) with peremptory measures; for, by fair means or foul, Julia shall accompany us home to Cornwall, or my name is not Richard Trevelyan!”

There proved, however, no occasion for the threat. *Fair* means were perfectly successful, so far as regarded the accomplishment of the object; but so far as regarded the advancement

of their daughter's welfare, the wisdom of Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan's tactics is much to be doubted. It was in Julia's presence they first proposed their project for the sanction of Sir Alan; who, having, in the first impulse of his surprise, turned his eyes upon his wife, was satisfied from the sudden flush overspreading her cheeks, that the plan originated with herself; and refrained from all demonstration of either surprise or mortification, while by a cold but unconditional assent, he completed her own. Unprepared for the scheme projected by the officious zeal of her father and mother, she was still less so for the calmness with which her dear Redwood seemed to contemplate her absence; and ill as she was inclined for the measure, Julia was now too much piqued by his indifference to oppose any obstacle to the plan.

"The weather is just now very propitious for so long a journey," uttered by Sir Alan, by way of collateral inquiry into their intentions, sounded to his wife very like a hint that the sooner they were gone the better. Having hastened her preparation accordingly, she now be-

gan to express to Mrs. Trevelyan great anxiety for change of air—great desire to be at home again. She was sure she should be better in Cornwall;—she should grow strong at Trevelyan Park;—it was so long since she had been *at home.*”

This last trait was conclusive!—Sir Alan Redwood would have forgiven her any thing but the feeling that still pointed out her “home” as elsewhere than at Farminghurst. He refrained from expressing his desire to be the companion of her journey to the south;—he refrained from even fixing a period for seeing her again; and even expressed his request to hear of her safe arrival at Trevelyan Park in terms so cold and formal, that compliance had been ignominious.

Heartstricken — disappointed — despairing,—poor Julia had scarcely fortitude to bear her up with any show of cheerfulness through the few days that elapsed previous to her departure; but pride—the suggester of so many pernicious lessons—enabled her to at least disguise the feelings she could not subdue. While her

bosom was throbbing with anguish, she managed to make her adieux to the mysterious Vicar as decisive as if she were on the point of quitting Farminghurst for ever; and to receive her husband's cold farewell, as lightly and unconcernedly as if she were only intent on a party of pleasure.

CHAPTER XI.

We shall write to you
As time and our concernings shall importune,
How it goes with us ; and do look to know
What doth befall you here. So fare you well.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

HAD Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan been aware of the exact nature of the duty they undertook in removing their darling Julia from the protection of her barbarous husband, not even their tenderness would have adventured so arduous a task. But with their usual opacity of vision, they were deceived to the last moment ;—were persuaded that Lady Redwood's expressions of anxiety to quit Farminghurst were genuine, and that the wild merriment bursting at intervals from her lips, even on the very morning of departure, arose from a pleasurable excitement. They saw not—they heard not — they had not

soul to know or dream, that it sprang from the bitterness of a deceived and breaking heart !

The flush upon her cheek, indeed, filled them with consternation. Regarding it as a hectic symptom, they were all eagerness to remove her from Yorkshire to the mild breezes of her natal atmosphere. But when (the portal past,—the last lodge—the last glen—the last wood of Farminghurst left behind and out of sight,) they saw their daughter sink heavily into the corner of the carriage, her hands crossed despairingly on her bosom, and the feverish glow of her cheek fading suddenly into the paleness of marble, Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan began to fancy that the state of her health was more perilous than they had imagined; and that she would scarcely bear the fatigue of so long a journey. They now blamed themselves for the responsibility they had incurred in the eyes of Sir Alan Redwood; and half resolved to dispatch a letter back to the Castle, requesting he would follow them as soon as possible to Trevelyan Park. Nothing but the apprehension of accelerating the progress of Julia's disorder by the agitation

attendant on the unwelcome appearance of her tyrant, induced them to postpone this ill-judging determination.

Lady Redwood *did*, however, bear her journey without inconvenience ; and the interest of revisiting the abode of her childhood *did*, for a single moment, disperse the mournful clouds gathered around her brows. But her heaviness of spirit came again only the more painfully for its momentary suspension. Nay, there was something in the unnatural isolation of her new position that seemed to strike her with double force, now that she found herself a wife—a *widow*—in the dwelling-place of her virgin years. It seemed as if she had cropped the flowers of her destiny ;—that nothing was left for her but its withering leaves, its bowed and faded stem ;—that Hope, the butterfly which once fluttered amid its perished blossoms was lying dead in the dust ; that the bee—that sanguine gatherer of its honey—had deserted a thing which now rendered back nothing but bitterness ;—that the rifled sweets were gone—that the eternal winter was at hand !

If the Trevelyans had indulged the flattering illusion that change of air and scene would bring back health and strength to their feeble charge, they were quickly undeceived. From the moment she arrived at her old home (which rose before her eyes as a monument to her departed happiness) her step grew heavier—her breath shorter—her eye more languid—her pulse more fluttering.—The Cornish physicians, who had seen her depart three years before in all the bloom and elasticity of girlhood, shook their heads as they noted her parched lips and hollow eyes, and listened to the nervous huskiness of her voice. It happened that their visits were paid immediately after the daily arrival of the post, when the excitement of expecting a letter from Farninghurst and the subsequent disappointment of her expectations, filled her veins with fire and her nerves with irritation. Unable to account for the stir of pulse perceptible in her frame, they followed the course systematically pursued by persons accustomed to watch over English constitutions, and attributed the mischief they could not develop to the existence of

latent consumption. Although the lungs, they admitted, were not at present affected, they deprecated all exposure to atmospheric changes, and desired that their patient should be at once amused and kept quiet. The lungs!—with the heart so near, that they should remain blind, deaf, and insensible to its influence!—

Meanwhile Lady Redwood profited by the privilege of an invalid to write no letters and see no company. After the few formal lines in which she officially announced to Sir Alan, her “arrival at dear Trevelyan after a safe and delightful journey,” she resolutely refrained from addressing him. What indeed could she have said, debarred from reference to the one sacred subject uppermost in her mind?—Or how could she have addressed him on common place topics, while her whole soul was withered up by the shadow of the unsurmountable barrier existent between them?—

With respect to society, it had been her intention in accepting her parents’ invitation, to play her part of excellent dissembling to its utmost limit; to smile, talk, and apparently

enjoy herself as she had been wont to do, among her early friends and connexions. But the first few days past at Trevelyan proved her incompetency to such exertions. The neighbouring squirearchy—who came thronging to the Park to welcome back their fellow squire and squires, and listen to wonderful tales of their Italian travels,—regarding Julia's sojourn with her family as the visit of an only child to her adoring parents, tortured her with facetious references to her absent husband, inquiries respecting the probability of his arrival, and expressions of anxiety to make the acquaintance of a being so idolized and idolizing. It was impossible to court the continuance of these vexations; and entrenching herself accordingly in the decree of the physicians that she was to be kept quiet, she confined herself to two cheerful comfortable apartments connected with her own room; which, in contemplation of the future visits of Sir Alan and Lady Redwood to a home which must one day become their own, had been splendidly fitted up for her by the kindness of her father. The country neighbours were easily

satisfied. Having been admitted to a sight of the great lady of Farminghurst Castle, they ascertained that she was by no means so pretty as when (as little Julia) she paced the gravel walk by Miss Wilmot's side;—that she still wore a simple dress of white muslin; — and that she was by no means so well worth looking at and listening to as her more chatty and equally travelled mother. The reality of her indisposition was too apparent to induce any suspicion of fine ladyism in her self-sought seclusion; and seeing her so languid, pale, and thin, they politely wished in their hearts that the first little Redwood might prove a son and heir.

Poor Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan were not, however, to be so deceived. The Squire, to whom his daughter's merest finger-ache had ever been as an attack of the plague, now saw death inscribed in her hollow brows and attenuated form. Did not the very physicians talk about consumption;—did not Julia, herself, though reluctantly, admit that she could neither eat nor sleep?—Her appetite was gone,—her powers of rest;—it was all too plain,—too terrible!—His

only daughter—his darling daughter!—Poor Mr. Trevelyan shuddered while he whispered to his poor old wife that the spring would come again, and find them childless. “So young—so beautiful—to think that we should survive her,” he exclaimed, with outspread hands, as he attempted to subdue his irritation by pacing up and down Mrs. Trevelyan’s dressing-room.

“No, no, no,—do not say so!” cried the poor mother, laying down her work and taking off her spectacles, as if to recall all her perceptive powers for a mental revisal of the case. “Camomile admits that, at present, the disease has no hold on the constitution. The dear creature suffers no pain,—breathes freely.

“But her pale face, her debility?”

“I sometimes think we have done wrong to call in the aid of physicians. I have never (thank Heaven, and thank you, my dear husband,) had occasion to see much of human affliction; but I cannot help fancying that a great part of her suffering is on the mind. That history of the ghost, which Sterling persists in,

and which, I find, was the common talk of the country at Farminghurst, must have arisen from some nervous panic."

"What say you to inviting Miss Wilmot here?—Perhaps Julia may have less reserve with her than us."

"Miss Wilmot, indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Trevelyan. "It would be hard indeed were my only child to show more confidence in her governess than in her mother."

"She may hesitate about alarming *you*."

"True!" replied the old lady; and the *woman* having given vent to her little movement of pique, the *mother* readily consented to a proposal which, by any possibility, could prove advantageous to the beloved invalid. But unfortunately, the friend of Lady Redwood's youth was absent on a distant tour; and still more unfortunately, a visitor arrived in her place, than whom the Fates could scarcely have provided a more pernicious substitute. Mr. Trevanion, whose estates lay on the western coast of Cornwall, having accidentally heard of his niece's indisposition, considered it his duty to

come and remind her of the uncertainty of human life, and the insufficiency of human skill in repelling the progress of disease. His solemn face and doleful tones, combined with the fading hues of autumn and the dispiriting influence of the equinoctial weather, completed the charm. Lady Redwood soon began to fancy not only that she was dying, but dying of a broken heart. The more persuaded, however, she grew of the fact, the more she was bent on screening it from her unfortunate parents, and preventing rumours of her situation from reaching her husband. Having hinted to Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan that she was in correspondence with the Castle, they were very ready to desist from all further communication with a son-in-law, now the object of their detestation.

“When all is over,” mused poor Julia, “when my end is approaching,—then let him come, and gaze upon the wreck of the wife he has sacrificed. Let him see me perish;—let my closing eyes but detect some expression of sympathy

and pity in his own, and I shall die contented !”

But however contented she might wish to render her last moments, Uncle Trevanion took care that her present ones should assume a less amiable character.

“ And so, my dear,” said he, having visited her dressing-room with a bundle of tracts under his arm, “ I find by a letter from my wife, that the Walpoles have profited by your absence to take up their abode at Farminghurst ?”

Julia pretended to turn a deaf ear. She was unwilling Mr. Trevanion should discover that he was the first to communicate the intelligence.

“ Pray did Sir Alan inform you in his last letters that Miss Redwood was established under his roof ?”—

“ Miss Redwood ?”—

“ His little girl.—Martha Walpole is in correspondence with one of my wife’s sisters (whom you drank tea with one evening at my house), and writes her word that at Sir Alan’s wish she has conveyed her poor motherless little charge

to Farminghurst; and installed her under the care of a regular governess, able to supply the deficiencies of *your* inexperience. It seems the Walpoles have engaged to pass the winter there."

"Have they?—I rejoice to hear it. Sir Alan being detained there on business, I am glad to find he has secured a little cheerful society."

"Cheerful? the Walpoles cheerful society?—Well—well!—they are at least well-principled, right-thinking people, who will speedily counteract any little irregularities you may have introduced into the establishment. By the way, my dear Julia, I am sorry to find that their feelings have been very much hurt by the way in which you have set your face against every thing connected with the memory of poor Lady Redwood. I believe one of Mrs. Walpole's chief objects in taking up her abode at Farminghurst is to put an end to the reports you have circulated of the house being haunted."

"I—I circulate such a report!"—exclaimed his niece; "I, who, with the exception of a

few formal visits, have had no communication with his Yorkshire neighbours. The house haunted?—What an absurdity!”—

“I am glad to hear you say so. Mrs. Trevanion informs me an opinion is prevalent that you have quitted your husband’s protection in consequence of seeing, or fancying, or stating that you saw, the apparition of the deceased Lady Redwood.”

“Can it be possible,” exclaimed poor Julia, “that so absurd a report has been promulgated in consequence of my having been startled by the sudden entrance of Sir Alan into my dressing-room, when over-fatigued by a long journey?”—

“It seems too that your coldness has given great offence to a worthy family in the village who always lived on terms of affectionate intimacy with your predecessor;—that you never so much as suffered poor Dr. Hobart to have a five minutes interview with your husband.”

Poor Lady Redwood, recollecting only too well that the Vicar’s shortest sentence was of that duration, and his shortest visit one hundred times as long, groaned aloud.

“ In short, my dear niece, I own it affords me considerable mortification to find that in the brief space of four months of married life, your conduct has alienated the affections of your husband, disgusted his whole family, his whole county,—driven the poor from his gates, his child from his protection, and thrown you back upon the hands of your father and mother ;—to say nothing of the vexation Mrs. Trevanion and myself experience, on hearing you described as a cold-hearted, artificial young woman ; too selfish to resign the idle habits into which you have been so unfortunately petted by my brother and sister.”

“ This is too much—too much !” cried poor Julia, bursting into tears ; “ my conduct,—my motives,—my very feelings misrepresented. Oh that I had never formed this miserable connexion, the origin of so much suffering — so much humiliation !”

“ My love, it was a thing of your own doing. I find that your parents would never have consented to the match, but for the obstinacy with which your heart was set upon it ; and you

remember that even I, your uncle, considered it my duty to set before you in the clearest light the hazards of the step you were taking."

But Lady Redwood remembered nothing, heard nothing, saw nothing. The idea that Sir Alan, not content with banishing her from his heart had circulated calumnies respecting her, absorbed her every faculty, her every feeling. She longed for Mr. Trevanion's departure that she might sit down and give vent to the wounded feelings so long repressed. Away with all reserve!—She had done wrong in so long remaining silent!—Henceforward she would at least express her sense of the injuries, the mortifications to which she was subjected. It is an easier thing to write than to give utterance to the effusions of wounded pride, of wounded affection. A pen obeying the dictates of an excited heart is always fluent—often eloquent; and within an hour of her uncle's departure to take his easy, jog-trot, morning's amble in the park, several pages of Julia's delicate penmanship expressed in the following lines the tumult of her gentle bosom.

CHAPTER XII.

No language can express the smallest part
Of what I feel, and suffer in my heart
For you, whom best I love and value most.
But to your service I bequeath my ghost,
Which from this mortal body when untied,
Unseen, unheard, shall hover by your side ;
Nor fright you waking, nor your sleep offend,
But wait officious and your steps attend.

PALEMON AND ARCITE.

“Trevelyan Park.

“I have been greatly to blame ! I ought not to have quitted your roof without a frank avowal of the bitterness of feeling instigating my return to that happy home of my childhood, which I would to Heaven I had never quitted. But I did not dream that the delicacy or timidity which sealed my lips, would expose me to the aspersions by which I find my character

injured in the estimation of the world. I trusted that you,—my lawful, my chosen protector, would be the last to assign to the gossip of society the unwarrantable judgment you have formed of my disposition. What have I done to deserve all this?—You found me happy, and conducing to the happiness of others,—the idolized child of doating parents. You saw (for how impossible was concealment to a heart unpractised as mine!) with what rash confidence I deposited every chance of future peace in your hands;—that my whole soul was absorbed in your affection;—that with you ‘either I must live or have no life.’

“Why did you accept such a deposit?—Why foster and sanction a warmth of attachment which you knew was lavished in vain? You,—wedded to the grave,—engrossed by remembrances of a tenderness as fond as that you discerned in my bosom towards yourself,—how could you venture, in the calmness of your deliberation, to chain me for life to the coldness of the sepulchre!—I am raving! I no longer know what I say or write! Stung to the heart

by your ingratitude, I am careless of giving offence. What avails a momentary pang inflicted on your self-love, compared with the gnawing anguish to which, for three months past, you have condemned me?

“But no matter. I write in haste, but with as much firmness as a year’s deliberation could procure.—Let us part!—Do not cheat the world by a semblance of harmony which exists no longer; which, alas! never existed. You have done your work in traducing me by accusations of hard-heartedness—of selfishness; even I, who would have sacrificed every wish, every inclination for your slightest token of approval. Afford me at least, by sanctioning my residence with my parents, the means of vindication; that, during the short remnant of my days, I may strive to knit anew the happy interests of my youth, nor subject myself to fresh charges of rebellion and disobedience. Enjoy yourself in the society of those to whom you should never have given a rival in your—(I was about to say your affections—but when were they ever mine?)—your household and autho-

city. You will soon be disencumbered of even the shadow of restraint. But when you learn my death,—do not, on peril of consigning another victim to an early grave,—do not again venture to take to your bosom a trusting, doating, miserable being; who, once undeceived, may like myself dash away the remnant of life as a vain and valueless possession. Farewell! I will not trust myself to say more. I will not expose the anguish of a devoted heart to the curiosity of those around you. I wait but your reply to prepare my father for a measure that will give liberty to you, and peace to me.”

Little did the affectionate parent of Lady Redwood conjecture, when he performed his quotidian duty of transferring the correspondence of Trevelyan Park from the letter-box to the post-bag, that the weighty epistle, double,—treble,—quadruple,—addressed in Julia’s handwriting to her lord and master, was so big with important matter. Still less did Trevanion, when he took his seat at the dinner-table, to acquaint his brother-in-law with the result of his morning’s observations—the dilapidated state of

his fences, the meagreness of his flocks and herds, and the ruinous condition of his plantations,—conjecture that his jeremiads of the morning had produced so remarkable an effect on the mind of Lady Redwood.

The little party humdrummed through their two courses,—aided by pretty nearly the same observations that had fallen from each on the same spot the preceding day; lamenting that dear Julia should confine herself to her own room; and concluding with a declaration that perhaps, after all, quiet was the best thing for her. Every thing went on as usual. The doors opened and shut the same number of times; and Mr. Trevelyan uttered his accustomed exhortation to the butler to let the fire be looked to before the servants left the room. Who would have guessed that the only daughter of the house was pacing her apartment above, in indescribable agitation of feeling; her overcharged heart bursting with the excitement of her recent effort, her burning eyes unmoistened by tears, her flushed cheeks glowing with indignation. Could Camomile have peeped in upon

her proceedings, it is probable that he might have added a strait-waistcoat to the rest of his useful suggestions.

And all this perturbation was to last for a week!—Six long days must elapse previous to the arrival of the answer which would unseal the lips and seal the destinies of Lady Redwood. Six long days,—six long nights!—Could human patience, could human strength, support her through a continuance of such a conflict; and enable her to bear up against the well-meaning fussiness of her father and mother. It was at least some comfort that Mr. Trevanion would not be present at the crisis; that he would be gone back to prognosticate evil to his own wife, previous to the announcement of her separation from her own husband. Already she counted the hours till the fatal day. The post came in early; she should have the day before her to communicate the astounding fact to her father and mother; the preceding night to strengthen her spirit with quietness.—But alas the best digested plans are the sport of time

and chance. Instead of supporting the conflict for one hundred and forty-four hours, the delicate frame of Lady Redwood sank on the second day of trial. A nervous fever manifested itself; Camomile was sent for; his patient grew delirious, and the squire and squiress distracted. Long before the arrival of the Thursday which was to bring the fatal fiat from Farminghurst, an express was on its way thither to acquaint the hard-hearted Baronet that he might spare himself the discredit of negative or affirmative;—that the King of Terrors was about to take under his protection the fair flower withered by the biting blasts of his indifference.

Fortunately the letter in which Mr. Trevelyan hastily and harshly set forth both the evil and its origin, never reached the hand of Sir Alan Redwood. He had already quitted home. The appeal—the affecting appeal of his wife had instantly determined him to set forth and plead his cause in person; explain all that was mysterious in his own conduct,—and soothe away all that had been painful to herself. Never was there a man so overwhelmed with surprise as

Julia's husband by the sudden avowal of her feelings,—her unlooked-for, her undreamed of feelings. So persuaded as he had been of her coldness,—her worldliness,—her egotism, it seemed, on the perusal of her letter, as if a mine of unappreciable wealth were opening at his feet; and all his visions on the eve of realization. She *had* loved him then;—she *had* been willing to become a mother to his child,—a ministering angel to his destinies. *His* reserve had been the cause of all their misunderstanding—*her* jealousy the origin of all her melancholy! How soon, how readily could all be explained;—how delightful the meeting after so inauspicious a farewell!—He had been on the point of losing his Julia; she had been on the eve of deserting him for ever; but it was not too late!

Oh! for a horse with wings!—
To bear him on its back to

Trevelyan Park. Oh! for an advent of Nat.
Lee's divinities; those

Gods, who annihilated time and space,
To make two lovers happy.

In a few hours he was in his travelling carriage,—on his road to Cornwall,—on his road to Julia;—the Julia of the Ludovisian gardens and Horatian Villa. No longer the moping wayward Lady Redwood; but the Miss Trevelyan who had wept on his bosom while uttering her avowals of love—her promises of faith. It is seldom that the leafless hedges and swampy roads of a November journey appear so charming in the eyes of man, as they seemed to the Baronet, while traversing the cross roads and miry ways dividing the northern extremity of Yorkshire from the southern extremity of Cornwall. Scarcely stopping to eat and never to sleep, on his route, it was midnight when he arrived within ten miles of Trevelyan Park. What was to be done? Sir Alan dreaded interfering with the routine of the squire's establishment, or provoking the comments of the family by making his appearance in the middle of the night; and half determined to remain at the inn so as to reach the hall by breakfast time on the following morning. Already he had reached the court-yard, when this project occurred to

him ; where, to his surprise, the landlord having approached and flared a candle in his face, uttered an exclamation of disappointment.

“ What is the matter ? ”—cried he, preparing to alight.

“ Beg pardon, sir ! ” replied the man, apprehensive of having displeased a gentleman in a new chariot and four. “ Hope no offence. Took you for the doctor from Truro.—Squire Trevelyan’s groom’s been waiting for him here these three hours.—Fancy he’ll be too late.—You’re a stranger in these parts I take it, or you’d understand that gentle and simple—”

“ Who is ill at Trevelyan Park ? ” inquired Sir Alan in a faint voice, falling back in his carriage. “ The old lady—the—the—”

“ *Ill*, sir ? Lor’ bless you, sir,—I wish she *may* be ill at this present speaking. The squire’s young man says as there wasn’t half an hour’s life in her when he came away. They’ve been hunting all over the country for advice ; but, as I said before, ‘ Lor’ bless you, Dick ! ’ says I, ‘ what signifies advice when the strength’s gone ? ’ She’s been raving these three days ; for all the

bleeding in the world would n't keep down the fever, till she dropped all o'sudden like a spent ball; and now—"

"Mrs. Trevelyan is advanced in years," faltered Redwood, for he had not courage to hazard a direct inquiry.

"Mrs. Trevelyan? — Lor' bless you, sir; it be'n't Mrs. Trevelyan! — It be Squire's daughter, Miss Julia as was.—Married only a day or two back, as one may say; and sent back home to die.—God love her, pretty lamb! — I lived bailiff in the family, and have known her ever since she was as high as my stick."

Poor Redwood heard no more. To the infinite consternation of the landlord of the Trevelyan Arms, he cut short his communication with, "Horses on, instantly!"—nor was it till he was some hundred yards advanced on the road, that the ex-vassal of the family became aware of all he hazarded by his abrupt and un-called-for disclosures.

CHAPTER XIII.

Oh ! if thou hast at length
Discovered that my love is worth esteem,
I ask no more, but let us hence together.
And I—let me say *we*—may yet be happy.

SARDANAPALUS.

ALTHOUGH the legislation of Lady Redwood's sick room was at present consigned to the hands of four of the best-meaning and worst-judging persons in the world,—her father, mother, uncle, and apothecary,—they had just united sense enough among the party to prevent Sir Alan from rushing distractedly to her presence, and crushing the little hope remaining. The expected physician soon made his appearance ; but he came only to confirm their worst apprehensions, and to declare that in the remote possibility of the patient's struggling

through the attack, mental alienation could scarcely fail to be the result.

Even this was something. The poor old father and mother eagerly clung to the prospect of seeing their rescued child, led about in helpless imbecility, rather than surrender her to the grave ; and as to her husband, he was too lost, too utterly self-abandoned, to calculate on possibilities. All he could do was to kneel by the sufferer's bedside,—listening to every breath, every murmur,—watching every change on her countenance ; and, when the obscurity of the chamber permitted, supplying the attendance of those who ministered to her wants. He interposed indeed his authority, when on the first promise of returning reason Mr. Trevanion suggested the necessity of apprising her of her situation, and affording her spiritual preparation for the grave ; and at length, on the appearance of a decided amendment, succeeded in prevailing on her parents to retire to rest, and leave him in charge of a treasure which none knew better how to value.

Many days had elapsed since Julia had ex-

hibited any degree of personal consciousness; but the deep sleep that now overpowered her faculties, afforded the promise of refreshment; and with anxiety mingled with hope Redwood bent over her,—listened to her light breathing, — and noticed that the fever was abating in its virulence. The sighs that escaped her bosom seemed to arise from some moral cause rather than from the oppression of disease: she was struggling back to life,—to the sense of her miseries. He even heard her breathe his name as if in the transports of a dream.

“ No letter yet ? ”—she faltered, without unclosing her eyes. “ Will not Redwood deign to write to me ? ”—

“ Hush ! ” said he, in a low voice, apprehensive that she would injure herself by further agitation. “ He is coming.”

“ No, mother, no !—we must not meet again. He has broken my heart. Let me die in peace.” And again she sunk into lethargy, as if incapable of confronting the wretchedness of her condition. Towards morning she again betrayed symptoms of animation; again inquired for

letters ; again, and with the tenderest adjurations, breathed the name of her husband. Half concealed behind the draperies of her bed, trembling lest he should augment her perilous excitement, he no longer dared trust himself to reply. She was now sufficiently recovered to detect his voice ; and summoning her accustomed attendants he stole away from her apartment.

It was no longer possible to doubt his influence over her feelings. Even had her letter left a shadow of mistrust upon his mind, the tones of endearment in which this being, hovering on the brink of the grave, pronounced his name and clung to every token of his early love, must have convinced the most obdurate heart. But he must yet refrain from explanation, — yet postpone that precious interview which, he flattered himself, would conduce more to her recovery than all the medicaments of the physicians.

“ My dear sir,” said his friend Trevanion, drawing him aside as soon as Camomile and Company pronounced that they were beginning

to entertain sanguine hopes in her behalf, "as your departure would no longer leave any peculiar responsibility on the hands of the family, I am sure you will pardon me for suggesting that it would be highly prejudicial to my poor dear niece to find you an inmate of this house on her restoration to consciousness. It is a hint that could scarcely be given by Trevelyan and my sister, without incurring the charge of inhospitality; but at my years, and considering the terms of confidential regard on which we mutually are, I am sure I shall be forgiven for candidly owning that the prejudice poor dear Lady Redwood appears to have conceived against you—"

"Arises," cried Sir Alan, no longer able to repress his impatience, "from mutual misunderstanding. I came hither only in compliance with—" he paused;—he *could* not say with her invitation—"with Julia's wish for an interview."

"Well! my dear sir," replied Mr. Trevelyan shaking his head. "I have candidly given you my opinion; to which I will only

add, that should you persist in your determination, neither Camomile nor I will answer for Lady Redwood's life."

He did, however, persist. In the face of Mr. Trevanion's homilies, Mr. Trevelyan's prescriptions, and the indignant remonstrances of the lady mother, he resumed his post by Julia's bedside; and, after carefully concealing himself from her observation so long as her debility of frame rendered agitation dangerous, seized the first moment of returning strength to recall himself to her notice, to enfold her within his arms; implore pardon for all his past offences, real and imaginary; and re-cement his union with his wife by sweeter and bitterer tears than had ever yet been wept by either.

It was not, however, for many weeks,—(not till Lady Redwood was able to rise from her sick-bed, and nighed cozily in her arm-chair by the fireside, give ear to the explanation now so eagerly tendered by Sir Alan,)—that the following narrative sufficed to obliterate all traces of her jealousy, her repining, her ingratitude. It afforded no small subject of consternation to

her father, when occasionally he intruded upon their *tête-à-tête* (in order to ascertain that the apartments were regulated to thermometer temperature) to perceive that his darling Julia's eyes were often red with weeping, and *her* darling Redwood almost breathless with the interest of the conversation they were holding together.

* * * * *

“I need not remind you, dearest,” said Sir Alan, while Julia averted her face lest she should betray an overweening interest in the narrative, “that it was in my earliest childhood I experienced the loss of both my parents. I never knew them,—I never missed them,—but grew up in the family of my guardian, Mr. Walpole, as though it were my own. My school vacations were passed at his residence; all my pastimes, all my enjoyments, seemed to originate from thence; and if they were scanty and different from those accorded to my companions, the old gentleman dealt with me only as with his own children, with his wife, with his very self.

“These worthy but most unconciliating

people belonged in short to that austere class of the rigidly righteous, of which the Trevanions have afforded you a modified specimen ; persons who

Hope to merit Heaven by making earth a hell ; and are so much on their guard against the frailties of mortal nature, that they dare not even taste the cup of sweets vouchsafed by Providence, lest there should be poison in the lees ! Mr. Walpole was a noble-spirited man ; but hard, dry, self-opinionated ; his wife, one of those magnifiers of nothingnesses who have always a microscope in their hands, to quote deformities in the fairest works of nature ; and pry into causes where the effect alone concerns them.

“ Martha, the eldest,—by very many years the eldest daughter,—exhibited a promising combination of the defects and deficiencies of both her parents ; formal, pedantic, supercilious, with nothing human, nothing loveable in their nature. Bigoted in their religious principles, the creed of the Walpoles was of a selfish and repugnant kind ; rebutting all human predilec-

tions, — all sublunary gratifications; yet imparting no charm to the state tendered in exchange for so many sacrifices. Towards myself, the demeanour of the family never went beyond a compassionating toleration. They thought me, indeed, unlucky to have been born with so many temptations to criminality, as a considerable estate and family interest could not fail to supply;—in intellect a weakling;—in spiritual prospects a castaway. All their efforts (and they laboured diligently in their vocation) would scarcely, they feared, endue me with a becoming contempt of the world and its ways, but they did their best to preserve me from temptation, by carefully secluding me from communication with the heartless children of perdition.

“Under these circumstances, you will not wonder that I was induced to regard my playfellow, little Mary (the youngest of the family) as a being of a very superior order; for although far from participating in the rampant wilfulness of my own disposition, she was free from the hard presumptuous self-sufficiency, and pha-

risaical pride of her tribe. She was not pretty,—scarcely even good-looking; but by the side of Martha's gaunt figure, and the stern visages of the old people, her countenance grew pleasing and person graceful. She was young, too; and amid the dull solemnities of the Walpole establishment, my eyes rested upon Mary as the only living thing with which I could sympathise; and almost as great a victim as myself. By the time I attained my nineteenth year, I fancied myself desperately in love with her;—told her so;—implored her affections in return; and having mutually plighted our girl-and-boyish faith, formally requested the sanction of old Walpole.

“The world was of opinion that this attachment was exactly what he expected,—what the whole family had long been planning. Yet Mr. Walpole insisted that we should meet no more till the attainment of my majority; and sent me abroad with a ‘serious’ tutor to put the strength of my passion and my principles to the proof. This again the world hailed as a hazardous experiment,—predicting that Mary

Walpole's pale face and spiritless demeanour would do little in restricting the wild courses of a boy of nineteen; but had they known more of the monotonous and chilling interior of Mr. Walpole's family, they would have been aware that a person whose growth had grown and strength strengthened in its iron trammels, must have acquired a lethargy of docility not easily thrown off. It is absurd to describe the ardent spirit of youth as boiling only the more impetuously for the restraints imposed upon its impulses; nothing is more readily checked than the vigour of the human heart. Moreover, mine was to be a tour of instruction rather than of amusement. The first year was to be passed at the University of Jena; and a considerable portion of the latter among those 'Isles of Greece,' which, although 'burning Sappho' may have loved and sung there in the olden time, present few modern beauties or modern blues to mislead the heart or mind of the youthful traveller. I had therefore but little temptation to swerve from my faith; and, on the whole, am inclined to think that absence did but increase the

strength of my attachment ;—for fancy or forgetfulness tended to beautify its object, while Mary's letters began to breathe a holy tenderness to which Mary's lips had failed in giving utterance. I returned home happy in the anticipation of assuming the possession and control of my extensive property, and sharing it with my guardian's daughter ; unaware of the change which time had been silently working in my views and feelings.

“ On re-entering Mr. Walpole's house, I became at once painfully sensible of the egotism dictating its narrow policy ;—of the insignificance of my guardian's character ;—of the arbitrary opinionativeness of his wife ;—of Martha's cold-blooded reserve and supercilious self-esteem. They still professed to despise the world, and live to and for themselves ; while I, in peace and charity with all mankind, and perhaps too easily captivated by the specious blandishments that courted me in society, was eager to open my house—my heart—my mind—to all the world. No act of treachery had

put me out of humour with human kind:—they spoke me fair,—and I doubted not meant me well.”

“And Mary?” whispered the anxious Lady Redwood, interrupting for the first time her husband’s narration.

“I would willingly avoid imputing the shadow of blame to her,” he resumed, in a more subdued tone. “But I must admit that Mary shared the condemnation which my amended experience brought down on every member of her family. She had gained nothing since we parted, and lost much. The freshness of early youth was gone, both from her countenance and character. If less frigid in demeanour than her elder sister, she had become reserved to a degree inconsistent with the fervour of love; and in our private interviews, persisted in the same heartless formality necessitated by the presence of the family:—her notions of decorum were now so rigid, and her judgments so harsh, that I shuddered at the idea of passing my life with so precise and uncommunicative a person. But

it was too late to recede. The Walpoles were bent on the early celebration of our nuptials; and trained as I had been under their yoke, it appeared to me impossible to contravene their authority or set aside their judgment.

“The nearer, however, I drew to the moment which was to operate so decisively on my destiny, the more I clung to the attractive range of society now, for the first time, open to my participation. My engagements with Miss Walpole were not so generally known but that many a mother, many a daughter, laboured to embellish my existence with the charm of female favour. Courted, adulated, welcomed to hundreds of the gayest houses of the metropolis, it was only at my guardian’s that I was received with louring brows and ceremonious coldness;—that my actions were subjected to perpetual investigation, incessant blame, and my condition of life condemned as a source of empty show and worldly care. I longed to get Mary away from the influence of her friends. Since she must unavoidably be-

come my wife, I resolved to do my utmost in modelling her to those graces which I was now beginning to prize so highly, or in rendering society sufficiently attractive to tempt her from the solitude which she knew not how to embellish. I loved music;—and Mary was no musician. I was fond of poetry;—and Mary had been taught to regard it as a frivolous and profane thing. In Italy, I had begun to study the language of Metastasio;—and I found it qualified by the Walpoles as a vain and wanton dialect. I delighted in pictures;—and my guardian persisted in defining them as a strip of canvas daubed with meretricious colours, at an infinite waste of time and pains to some individual who might have been usefully employed in mechanical labour. He seemed to pity me for being proprietor of so much superfluous brick and mortar as was wasted in my dwelling at Farminghurst; and as to Burnley—what was the use of a second country-seat?—I might either let it, or convert its useless lawns to agricultural purposes. All these narrow views of life

and manners provoked not a single argument of opposition or remonstrance from Mary's lips; and, on the eve of her marriage with the man of her choice, it seemed far more a matter of regret to her to quit her Dorcas societies and Sunday-schools, her weekly pensioners and favourite preacher, than a subject of joy that she was about to join her fate to mine, to be the ornament of my home, and the sharer of my joys and sorrows. How could I be satisfied with so limited, so contemptuous a measure of personal affection?—How could I bear that a tie so momentous as that of conjugal faith should be regarded as secondary to the ordinary connexions of life?—The more I saw of Lady Redwood's impassive coldness, the more I withdrew from her those diminishing impulses of tenderness, which required the genial atmosphere of sympathy to warm them into new and perfect growth!

“You, dearest Julia, may perhaps have been induced to inveigh against the dulness of the Castle. Judge what it was under the dominion

of that frigid and paralyzing spirit of bigotry, which banished music, poetry, flowers, from its desolate apartments; and rejected those still more cheering influences of endearment and mirth, which brighten even the dreary resorts of penury! Dispirited by her grave and oppressive taciturnity, I soon took refuge from my unattractive home in an affected ardour for field-sports; profiting by the excuse thus afforded, to fill my house with my country-neighbours, or escape it altogether by prolonged visits to their own. Mary declined accompanying me; and it was some relief to throw off, from time to time, the heavy yoke of dulness I had so madly affixed upon my own shoulders. The very name of home became loathsome to my feelings. No smiles awaited me on my return;—no interest animated my pursuits:—I experienced the torment of the criminal of the olden time chained by Mezentius to a corse. My irritation settled into coldness, and indifference was on the point of becoming aversion.

“The autumn succeeding my inauspicious marriage, I agreed to join a shooting expedition to the Moors; and on communicating to Lady Redwood the probability that I might be some weeks absent from home, I prepared myself for tokens of regret or displeasure. Mary contented herself, on the contrary, with a calm expression of satisfaction that I should be so long away; requesting that she might be permitted to invite her own family to bear her company while I remained in Scotland.

“‘My father will be well pleased to visit the Castle during your absence,’ she observed. ‘Your views and opinions are so opposite, that no satisfaction or advantage can result from your being together.’

“This declaration amounted to a tacit confession of her own discomfort in my society; for no two persons could be more congenial than Walpole and his daughter, none more positively at variance than his daughter and her husband. Meanwhile, notwithstanding my efforts to get away previous to the arrival of my father-in-

law, circumstances occurred to retard my departure; and during the eight-and-forty hours we passed under the same roof, the breach between us was incalculably widened by his pertinacity in favouring me with the same lectures, dictations, and reprovals, to which I had been compelled to submit during my minority. Lady Redwood, if she did not chime in with his admonitions, preserved a dignified silence; and never was there a sensation of release more gratifying than mine when, after a formal salutation from my wife, I turned my back upon Yorkshire, and felt respited for a time from my household tribulations.

“Nor did absence diminish the breach thus opened between us. My companions, a set of jovial bachelors who were tolerably aware of the unsatisfactory nature of my domestic connection, not only laboured to render me sensible to the joys of liberty, but were incessantly throwing out insinuations against petticoat government, and the odiousness of women of sour or shrewish disposition. But the cheer-

ful life for which we were indebted to the proverbial hospitality of the Highlands, formed in my eyes the best commentary on Lady Redwood's churlish unsociability; and when the period arrived for returning to Farminghurst, I shuddered at the prospect of encountering the Walpole circle, with its querimonious tones, its severity of universal condemnation, its selfish reserve, and pragmatistical importance. I knew that all my thoughts, words, and deeds, were about to be sifted through the sieve of their peculiar doctrines;—that my pleasures would be treated as sinful, my pursuits as contemptible;—that even Mary was beginning to regard me as a law-breaker and a reprobate!

“Under these circumstances, it was a considerable relief when a plan was suggested that our party, instead of breaking up at the close of the grouse-season, should re-assemble at Melton Mowbray towards the end of October, for the formation of a private hunting establishment; and, supported by so agreeable a pro-

ject, I returned home, determined to defy guardian, mother-in-law, Martha, nay, even Lady Redwood herself; to assert my own authority, seek my own amusements, and leave her to the enjoyment of those so little consonant with the temper of a man in the prime of health and prosperity."

CHAPTER XIV.

The silver shower, whose reckless burthen weighs
Too heavily upon the lily's head,
Oft leaves a saving moisture at its root.

WORDSWORTH.

“MY wife’s family,” resumed Sir Alan, after having paused to give audience to Julia’s exclamations of wonder and condemnation, “were, however, too much enlightened as to the obstinacy of my disposition, to suggest opposition to my plans. No proposal was made on either side that Lady Redwood should bear me company. Her father was anxious that she should return home with him, and as Mary had now the prospect of becoming a mother, the project was eligible enough. But she would not hear of quitting Farminghurst; and succeeded in persuading the old people to permit her sister

Martha to pass the winter in Yorkshire. My departure preceded theirs; so that I knew nothing of their state of feeling in taking leave of their widowed daughter—for such they already regarded her.

“ I need not weary your patience, dearest, by a description of the heartless mirth and festivity in which I passed the winter. It was my sole study to obliterate from my memory every thing connected with Farminghurst;—and I succeeded. Already I regarded my marriage as an act of boyish infatuation; and was even base enough to concede to my intimate associates the privilege of rallying me respecting my methodistical wife and miserable home. One or two of my friends even urged me to bolder resistance; to re-model my establishment and mode of life according to my own good liking. ‘ If Lady Redwood does not choose to conform to her husband’s wishes,’ argued they, ‘ let her go home again, or pray and preach elsewhere. You have St. Paul’s authority on your side to enforce her submission to your authority.’

“My opinions began to coincide with theirs; and already I determined that, after the event of Mary’s confinement, a mutual explanation should place us on a different footing; that either she should consent to render my house the resort of cheerful society and conform her own habits to the usages of the world, or that we should form separate households after our several fancies. I insinuated something of the kind in one of my letters; but Mary’s replies were so guarded and so cold, that it was impossible to judge whether the proposal was acceptable or painful to her feelings. She wrote regularly, giving me an account of all that interested or ought to interest me, concerning my tenantry and estates; but the tone of her correspondence partook of the dry circumstantiality of all letters of business.

“Never did I hail the approach of spring with so little satisfaction, as when a brighter verdure in the Leicestershire pastures reminded me that I should shortly have no further excuse for prolonging my absence. Lady Redwood’s confinement was announced for the beginning

of May; and at the end of March, I found my companions beginning to disperse. I took my leave of them with regret and envy. *They* were looking forward with eagerness to the season,—to their clubs, the Opera, the Derby, Almack's, and all the countless varieties of London pleasure; while *I* had nothing to anticipate but a sullen wife and discontented home. My utmost hope suggested that Mary's new position as a mother would tend to humanize her character, and warm her feelings towards myself; or that it would afford me an excuse for leaving her more than ever alone, and dispensing with the company of her odious relatives. On one point, moreover, I was positive; and expressed my determination so clearly in my letters, that even the coolness of Walpole blood was not proof against my authority. Of all the family, Martha had been the most audacious in her expressions of disapproval of my conduct; and not choosing to expose myself to discussions with her at so critical a moment as that of her sister's indisposition, I signified my wish that I might find Lady Redwood *alone* on my return

to Farminghurst. This was ungracious enough;—but it was better than a family quarrel.

“ I *did* accordingly find her alone; and not only more cheerless and dispirited than ever, but in a miserable state of health. But having neither sisters nor any near female relative of my own, I was little habituated to the peculiarities of feminine infirmity; and attributing the delicate appearance of my wife entirely to her situation, gave little heed to her illness. It did not render her kinder or more conciliating; and trusting that the birth of her child would restore her strength and soften her humour, I betook myself to my usual occupations,—riding over my farms with the bailiffs, making excursions in my yacht, and passing my evenings in the perusal of new works (certainly not selected by the Walpole dynasty) forwarded to me from town. It was inexplicable that, living together as we did, I could manage to see so little of my wife; or that she could persist in her cold and selfish alienation,—in cherishing so fixed a dislike to the father of her expected child.

“ One day, about a fortnight after my return, I had been occupied the whole morning with the keepers shooting landrails upon the marshes of Farming Level—(you remember it, Julia?—the salt-marsh extending from the cliffs to the sea, at the foot of the shrubberies?)—and having dismissed my people, I took a short cut homewards through the grounds, followed by a favourite setter. It was a lovely day in April,—mild, balmy, full of promise, full of hope; the trees budding around, the birds singing among the branches as if to encourage their growth; every bank purple with violets, and an endless variety of spring flowers enlivening the borders of the shrubberies. The clear blue skies, the bluer sea, the woods just rousing from their winter lethargy, the very herbage under my feet announcing a more buoyant and life-like texture,—all tended to raise my spirits and brighten my views. As I sauntered along, watching the squirrels which Ponto’s approach drove up the tall stems of the pine trees, I was forming a thousand projects for the future. I resolved that, on being assured of Lady Red-

wood's safety, I would visit London, perhaps Paris, and familiarize myself with the pleasures and diversions so fondly described by my Melton friends. Although deprived of my hopes of happiness, *amusement* at least was at my command ; and I promised to repay myself the infinite arrears of enjoyment still owing by by the Fates.

“ Engrossed by these chimeras, I reached that platform of the shrubbery, that fatal spot — (Sir Alan looked significantly at his wife ; and Julia, nodding her comprehension of his meaning, impatiently motioned to her husband to proceed,) to which you have since observed me affix a peculiar sentiment of interest ; when, to my surprise, I perceived Lady Redwood seated on the bench under the magnolia tree. Weak as she was, it was a considerable walk for her to have achieved ; and common courtesy required me to accost her, and offer my arm to facilitate her return ; when, on approaching her, I perceived with surprise that her features were swollen and discoloured with weeping. Strange

to say, I thought her prettier under that aspect than I had seen her since our marriage. She was more like the Mary of my youth.—Alas! it was so long since she had appeared to indulge in any womanly emotion.—

“ ‘What is the matter?’ said I, in a kinder voice than usual, and seating myself by her side, ‘Have you received bad news from your family?’

“ ‘No.’

“ ‘Are you indisposed?—overfatigued?’

“ ‘Not more so than usual.’

“ ‘But you have been crying.—What has distressed you?’—

“ ‘I often cry without any *new* distress.’

“ ‘You are weeping even now?’—

“ ‘Not for sorrow’s sake. Do not disturb yourself. My feelings are little worth investigation or comment.’

“ My suspicions were excited by these inconclusive answers; and I now insisted on an explanation. I fancy I spoke harshly, for Mary’s tears flowed unrestrainedly.

“ ‘Nay then,’ cried she, at length, as if by

an impulse beyond her own control; ‘why not vindicate myself by an avowal of the truth?—My lips will soon be closed for ever, my heart frozen into peace. Why, why—scruple to reveal its burning anguish? Yes! I *have* been weeping—enjoying the consolation of tears—the only comfort you have left me! But they were tears of joy; for I know that the end of my pilgrimage is approaching, and that my heaviness shall not endure for ever! Rejected as I am from your bosom—contemned—reviled—the day of my release is at hand; and I shall taste, after all my trials—my humiliation—my despair,—the tender mercies of a more forbearing Master.—Yes, Redwood, I am about *to die*. Rejoice with me!—rejoice for your own sake,—rejoice for mine!—Our ill-assorted marriage is on the eve of dissolution. You will be free to form a tie more congenial with your feelings; and I—(pray for me, that it may be so!) *I* shall be summoned to the enjoyment of a peace which passeth all understanding.’

“Startled by her unexpected vehemence, I

was still far from entering into the source of this exaltation of feeling.

“ ‘Calm yourself,’ I replied; ‘calm yourself. Such are the apprehensions of every woman circumstanced as *you* are now.’

“ ‘Was *ever* woman circumstanced as I am now!’—cried Lady Redwood, clasping her hands. ‘Did ever woman sacrifice her happiness, her principles, her tenderness, to be rewarded as I have been?—to ask for bread (even the nutriment of a craving heart) and receive a stone;—to have forsaken her own people and her father’s house, for the sake of one from whose bosom she is cast forth to perish!’—

“ ‘What mean you, Mary?’ I exclaimed, ‘explain the cause of this excitement.’

“ ‘Does it need interpretation, that the worm, long trodden under foot, should at length turn upon the iron heel by which its helplessness has been bruised?—Is it so strange—so miraculous—that even *I*, lowly and humiliated as I am, should pause upon the brink of the grave, and grieve that my youth has been spent in vain;

the warm impulses of my heart lavished on empty air, cast upon the waters, — disowned, disdained, polluted !’

“ ‘Suffer me to conduct you home,’ said I, with assumed calmness ; for I was now persuaded that my wife was labouring under a paroxym of insanity.

“ ‘No !’ — cried Lady Redwood. — ‘No ! Since I have been unable to control the impulses of an overcharged heart, *here* let me speak ; here, where the Almighty, to whose mercy I am hastening, looks down upon my sorrow ; — where the abundance and beauty which nature has shed around me to so little purpose, remind me that *something* exists on earth to render death an act of resignation.’

“ ‘My dear Mary, you alarm me and injure yourself by this violence,’ said I, inexpressibly awed by the solemnity of her voice and gestures, ‘You will yet live many years for the enjoyment of—’

“ ‘Hush !’ interrupted my wife, turning suddenly towards me. ‘But that a voice has spoken

to me,—but that I *know* myself on the brink of the great abyss, think you that my own lips, my own withered heart would have unclosed? Talk not to me of living!—Earth has no shelter for me but the grave.’

“ ‘Mary—Mary!’ cried I, ‘you are tempting Providence by these wayward ejaculations. With the poor, the naked, and the hungry suffering around, what right have *you*, the minion of prosperity, to rebel against God?’

“ ‘The eye of Heaven hath a clear insight into the value of its gifts,’ replied Lady Redwood. ‘Gold silver and gorgeous raiment, are not all in all in the sight of God, as in the sight of man. To possess the means of happiness, according to our powers of enjoyment, constitutes real prosperity. For me, I care but little nor have ever cared, for a lofty dwelling, obsequious attendance, or the trinkets of pomp. From my youth upwards, I have coveted but the approving eye and caressing hand of affection; and these were fated never to be mine! Admit then that I am a beggar, an outcast, a

miserable—miserable outcast!’ And the tears poured down her cheeks as she spoke.

“‘Are you serious in these charges?’ said I, still hoping and believing that she laboured under mental delusion. ‘Having rejected all my overtures of affection, of regard, of friendship, do you now accuse me of having been the first to outrage our vows of wedded love?’—

“‘Wherefore accuse you;—to whom have I to appeal for pity, or redress?—Listen to me! You know as fully as myself in what strict principles of piety I was reared. My parents, abhorring the idolatries of the world, taught their children to look upon images of silver and gold as things of no account to an immortal soul:—and so far it was easy to espouse their tenets. But they did more, and required more at our hands; and then, and then only, I grew rebellious to their will. What availed it to insist on the sacrifice of all carnal affections, when from my very childhood every feeling of my bosom had been devoted to my playmate Alan Redwood;—when, as I grew in years, that

childish regard had deepened into womanly tenderness? My father remonstrated ;—I told him it was already too late :—my mother warned and admonished me ;—I told her that my whole heart, my whole soul were yours, and yours for ever !

“ ‘ At length, they ceded to my prayers—but their blessing on our union was even as a curse ; for my father reminded me that whoso goeth forth to dwell in the tents of Belial must eat the bitter bread of his service ; and that the worldling I had chosen for my husband would be as an avenger to punish the sinfulness of my choice ! ’

“ ‘ And such,’ cried I, with indignation, ‘ such was Mr. Walpole’s notion of the feelings to be instilled into his daughter’s heart towards her husband ! ’

“ ‘ Blame him not ! ’ interrupted Mary, ‘ He sees things after the manner of his people. Would I had never presumed to look on them in a different light. Yes, Redwood, even thus forewarned, I *did* dream, I *did* hope, that the

companion of your infancy, childhood, manhood, had attained a chief influence over your mind, and might one day succeed in touching your stubborn heart. But lo! from the moment of our marriage, my trust was undeceived—oh! how bitterly undeceived. I saw that you despised my homeliness,—shrank from—’

“ ‘Desist, Mary, desist!’ interrupted I; ‘you cannot justify yourself in such assertions.’

“ ‘I can—I do! Remember your silence your coldness your reserve,—your unwillingness to conciliate my gratitude by the smallest sacrifice to the opinions you had seen consecrated in my eyes by the precepts and examples of my parents. You treated me with scorn,—almost with insult. I forbore to murmur, and you despised me only the more for the tameness of my submission. You quitted me,—abandoned me:—then, when in the languor of indisposition I most needed the sustaining hand of kindness, you deserted me for the companionship of those whose heartless levity contributed more largely to your diversion. What had I in ex-

change for the tenderness of which you defrauded me? *My tears!*—Day after day, during your absence, I came hither,—to this secluded spot; to weep over my own wretchedness and count the moments till your return.’

“ ‘Why — why not even then address me thus?’ cried I deeply affected. ‘Why not deign to disclose a state of feeling which assuredly your own demeanour afforded me no clue to penetrate?’

“ ‘Was it in the nature of woman to degrade herself still further in the eyes of a husband by whom she was openly despised?’

“ ‘On my soul, on my life, you wrong me! I too have been deceived—have deceived myself. I believed you careless of my happiness,—indifferent to my regard—wrapt up in your own family, — accountable only to Heaven, — engrossed by unceasing prayers.’

“ ‘And were they not all for *you*—for your welfare?—Unless when, despite myself, an involuntary supplication burst from my lips that I might learn to love you less; or that when I

should in the grave, repentance might overtake you for the sufferings you were inflicting on me !’

“ ‘Dearest—dearest Mary !’ cried I, folding her to my bosom,—‘ companion of my youth,—my chosen wife,—mother of my child,—why—why has this fatal reserve so long interposed between us ? But it is not yet too late ; — we have years of happiness in store !’

“ ‘No !’ faltered Lady Redwood, inclining her head (and for the first time for many months) upon my bosom. ‘But that my destiny is sealed, I should not have spoken thus. But *do* you really love me ? Can it be possible that all the wretchedness I have endured,—all the tears I have shed,—are attributable to the want of confidence which has suffered a cloud to gather between us ?’—

“ ‘It is—it is !’ said I.”

“ ‘I have wished for nothing but your affection, and yet—’

“ Say not another word !” cried I, again fervently clasping her in my arms. “ Provi-

dence is merciful. With such prospects of happiness opening around you, Mary, you will live to gainsay your own predictions. We shall—we must be happy!”

“ ‘For months past—nay ! from the period of your departure for Scotland,—from the period when I became convincingly aware of your indifference, I have never enjoyed a night’s repose. Food has not nourished me—sleep has not refreshed me. Nature can no longer support the conflict.’

“ Gazing earnestly in her face, I discerned fatal confirmation of this opinion.

“ ‘ You must have advice !’ I cried—

“ ‘ Willingly—since *you* desire it. But do you really imagine that drugs have influence over a disorder such as mine ?’

“ ‘ The cause of your mental irritation removed, a restoration of strength will follow. Promise me, Mary, to take care of yourself ?’

“ ‘ I will—I do;—and in evidence of my obedience, let us return home. The evening is growing chill.’

“The interest of our conversation had in fact prevented either of us from noticing that a heavy dew had risen; which, in Lady Redwood’s state of debility, was highly pernicious. The next day she was worse. I had no longer any inclination to quit her side even for a moment;—the neighbouring physician, whom I had summoned to her aid, admitted to me that it was highly improbable she would survive the event of her confinement! Unwilling as I was to admit the intervention of a third person between us in our altered state of feeling, I considered it a duty to the Walpole family to apprise them of their daughter’s precarious condition; nor, in the wretchedness and repentance of my soul, did I hesitate to acknowledge my past wrongs against her, and my earnest desire to redeem them. In the course of a day or two they arrived at Farminghurst; and they, who had been such unwelcome visitors in the house of feasting, were all that could be wished in the house of mourning. The stern grief of the old man who had so laboured to subdue every human emo-

tion within his heart, was inexpressibly affecting; and Martha and her mother were too much softened by the sight of Mary's suffering, to indulge in their former asperities. It seemed to afford peculiar satisfaction to poor Lady Redwood to see us all once more united on a friendly footing.

“ From the period of that fatal day, she had never been permitted to quit her own room; and nothing would persuade poor Martha, who was truly and tenderly attached to her sister, but that extreme care, the skill of her attendants, and above all the vigour of youth renovated by prospects of returning happiness, would carry her in safety through her evil day. But Mary knew better;—from the first she declared her death as certain, and never swerved from the opinion.

“ ‘ My sister wants to delude you into believing me a false prophetess,’ said she, with a smiling face and extended hand, one day as I approached her couch. ‘ Do not lend your ear to her, dearest Alan; or you will perhaps turn

aside from the petitions and remonstrances I have still to offer !—It will soon be too late ! In the struggle of that hour, I shall have no voice to commune with my husband.’

“ ‘ If you have a wish to express,’ I faltered, seating myself beside her, ‘ for the ease of your own mind, however needlessly, give it utterance.’

“ ‘ The spring comes forward so beautifully,’ said she, pointing with her thin hand to the window, round which the China roses were already clustering, ‘ the weather is so mild, so soft, so balmy, that I was in hopes of being able to reach that dear old spot with you again ;—that spot where your first kind tears of mercy announced that my day of tribulation was over !’

“ ‘ Wait another week,’ said I, in a low voice, ‘ and we will go there again together.’

“ ‘ Another week !’ murmured Mary, with a mournful wave of the head. ‘ In another week I shall be—— No matter,—why should I breathe a word to grieve you ? No, Alan—no ! I shall

go hence no more borne upon my own feet, or with the impulses of living breath in my bosom. And therefore, dearest, let me hasten to claim a promise at your hands. When all is over here, bequeath my poor babe to my mother's care, and quit a spot associated with so many unwelcome impressions. Go abroad—travel—bend your eyes upon other faces till you have forgotten poor Mary's;—and—'

“ ‘Never, never!’ cried I, pressing her hands within my own.

“ ‘It is presumptuous to suppose your bosom formed of other than mortal texture,’ she replied, striving to smile. ‘It is in the nature of the human heart to forget;—it is in the nature of the human heart to love again,—again and again. Only, dearest Alan, when you are about to take a new wife to your bosom—’ (she prevented my remonstrances by placing her cold hand on my lips) ‘pause for a moment to recall the evil effects of former precipitancy!—Pause, to consider whether between yourself and the object of your affections,

there exists that congeniality of principles, opinions, and condition, without which wedlock is a state of penance;—whether you are disposed—nay firmly determined, and at every personal sacrifice—to secure her happiness.—Less than such devotedness is not love ! Thus much for her sake and your own. For mine—for the sake of my child, if indeed my child survive,—promise me, dearest, dearest husband, that however your fancy may be captivated by a fair face and pleasing demeanour, you will ascertain the principles and temper of the woman you make its mother. Martha—fetch hither the bed prepared for this babe of promise. There — Redwood !—there stands the downy nest of the little being my heart so yearns to look upon, and which I shall never, never behold. — Clasp your hands in mine, dearest, clasp them in blessings upon its pillow;—and promise me that you will choose for it a mother who shall be tender to its infirmities and forgiving to its frailties.’”

He paused, and Lady Redwood hid her sobbing face in her hands.

“ I promised, Julia.—What would I not have promised to ease one pang of the unhappy creature who was hastening thus unrepiningly to the grave. A few nights afterwards I was summoned from my bed to speak to her. She was restless, feverish ;—her hour was approaching ; and Martha Walpole had reluctantly consented to summon me, that a few more—a few *last* parting words might pass between us. She commended her servants to me—she commended her poor to me ;—the naked whom she had fed—the babes whom she had instructed. She bad me honour her father and her mother ; be kind to her poor companionless sister ; forbearing to the Hobarts, the pastor delegated to feed my flock ;—and above all, after solemn exhortations of a still holier nature, she placed in my hand her own well-studied copy of the Scriptures, and on my finger, a ring (Julia ! I wear it still, and you have grudged me the indulgence), containing her own hair and an obituary inscription. Her attendants then forced me from the chamber, and compelled me to retire to my own. And lo ! when I beheld her again, the struggle

was over,—the flush had faded from her cheek—the beaming eye was closed. Mary lay composed upon her couch in the rigid stillness of death; and the feeble wail of an infant in the adjoining chamber apprized me that I was the father of a motherless child.”

CHAPTER XV.

I charge you by your love, to take some pity
On this distressed man. Help to restore him
That precious jewel he hath lost.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

To one endowed with poor Julia's sensibility there needed no comment in illustration of the foregoing narrative, or in reprobation of her own offences. Recognizing at once the peculiar claims enforced by Lady Redwood's afflictions on the memory—the remorse of her husband,—as well as the weakness and wickedness of her own groundless jealousy, she was now more inclined to quarrel with Sir Alan's obduracy towards his patient and devoted wife, than to blame his too strict performance of those promises which had soothed her dying hours. She no longer wondered at the caution with

which Redwood had yielded up her affection to herself—the vigilance with which he had studied her principles and practice; the sort of reluctance with which he had admitted to himself his inconstancy to the memory of the dead; and the fear and trembling with which he had elected her to be the mother of a child so solemnly committed to his charge.

And how had she repaid his confidence?—She blushed to think of it!—Her ungraciousness towards the Walpoles, whose importance in his estimation arose from so sacred an influence—her insensibility towards his little girl—her indifference to his household—her neglect of his humble tenantry—her incivility to the Hobarts—her untoward interference with a spot thrice hallowed by the memory of his unhappy victim! Poor Mary!—*who* could better sympathize than Mr. Trevelyan's daughter with the wretchedness of a neglected wife!—Poor Mary!—Lady Redwood actually longed to be at Farminghurst again, that she might renew and replace every object connected with one who had died so young and so full of sorrow. She yearned to

have the little motherless child in her arms;—to visit the poor—whom Mary, even amid her worst of trouble, had never overlooked;—to encourage the young—whom Mary, in the midst of sorrow and sickness, had laboured to train towards the skies. Satisfied of her unworthiness, she felt grateful to Redwood for loving her in spite of all her faults; and determined to profit by the first hours of returning health to study the acquirement of Mary's spirit of righteousness, without neglecting her own spirit of conciliation. She thought it would be easy, she knew it would be delightful, now that she saw clearly through the clouds enveloping the character of her husband, to pursue a system of life calculated to retain his affections, and render their future destinies as bright as she had dreamed them in the earliest hours of her enthusiasm. Every day added strength to her frame; every day added vigour to her mind. She felt almost inclined to rejoice that the stormy onset of her married life had compelled her to a course of such severe self-examination; had arrested her in the wild career of girlhood—the flighty heed-

lessness of prosperity,—and rendered her conscious of all the gifts for which she had to be at once grateful and accountable to Providence. Restored to Redwood's affections and confidence, she was at peace with all the world. She had patience even with uncle Trevanion, and defied Dr. Hobart's most mysterious whisper to ruffle her temper.

Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan, satisfied that nothing but the vigilance of their own attendance and the art of the Cornubian Galen had enabled their beloved daughter to overcome the miserable condition to which she was reduced by the indifference of the worst of husbands, profited by the earliest moment of her recovery to insinuate a hope that Sir Alan would never more remove her from their roof; and great indeed was their amazement when Julia, instead of seconding the petition, threw herself into the arms of her beloved Redwood, assuring them that there was no life for her save in his presence. Nor was their surprise diminished when, with the most winning frankness and many tears, Lady Redwood honestly accused her own

jealous perversity of all her past distresses, and implored oblivion for the past, and indulgence for the future.

The approach of spring enabled her to devote herself to the fulfilment of "vows made in pain," and resolutions conceived in a moment of penitence. On the return of Sir Alan and Lady Redwood to Farminghurst, no further complaints were made among the old domestics of the cold hauteur of her entrance into her husband's home, nor had she any cause to complain of the dreariness of their journey; for, having extended it through the metropolis, for the purpose of visiting the Walpoles and claiming their charge, little Mary's sallies and little Mary's smiles afforded continual matter of interest.

A few months afterwards, the whole Walpole family became her guests; and although at times the dissertations of the old lady and the homilies of her husband were somewhat tedious, there was a conscientiousness in all their doings, and a tenderness of affection towards their little grandchild, which bespoke her forbearance.

Towards Martha, she was even more kindly disposed;—for Martha, taught by sad experience, was so willing to sacrifice her predilections to conciliate the father of her dead sister's only child, that there was something almost affecting in the docility with which she, a middle-aged woman, strove to acquire the qualities amiable in his eyes. With Martha, she visited the poor and comforted the sick;—with Martha, she encountered the oppressive inanity of the vicarage;—with Martha, she laboured to accomplish her mind by a course of serious reading, for the duty of presiding over her daughter-in-law's education. Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan were amazed when they saw that it was a chief object with their beautiful daughter, their noble heiress, to convert herself into a governess; and implored her to invite Miss Wilmot from her retreat, to save her from such ignominious drudgery. But against this plan there was a serious objection. Lady Redwood's preceptress was now herself a happy wife; and poor Julia would certainly have been left to the fulfilment

of her task, but that maternal duties of her own soon interfered with the project.

Before the family quitted London the second year after their marriage, Dr. Hobart had the happiness of whispering to every family within ten miles of the vicarage, that he was about to travel up to town to administer the rite of baptism to the son and heir of his patron; and on his return, had the satisfaction of subdividing his discourse into divers heads. *Imprimis*, that the said son and heir was the finest infant in the kingdom; *secondly*, that Lady Redwood had gratified her husband by proposing old Mr. Walpole, in conjunction with her own father, as a sponsor to the child; *thirdly*, that her ladyship having been presented at the drawing-room by her cousin the Duchess, arrayed in all her family diamonds, had attracted universal admiration; *fourthly*, that he himself had been introduced by his patron, Sir Alan, to the nod of the King's Majesty; and, *fifthly*, that the united families of Redwood, Walpole, and Trevelyan were about to pass the summer

at the Castle. Mrs. Hobart herself, indeed, was furthermore heard to insinuate that the Doctor had pronounced his patron to be the most fortunate of men;—nothing being left himself, his friends, or the parish, to regret, in his——

SECOND MARRIAGE.

THE YOUNG BACHELOR
A NOVEL IN THREE VOLUMES
BY
JAMES H. BURNHAM
AUTHOR OF "THE YOUNG BACHELOR"
AND "THE YOUNG BACHELOR"
NEW YORK: PUBLISHED BY
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO., 15 N. 2ND ST.
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THE OLD
AND
THE YOUNG BACHELOR.

Satire recoils whenever charg'd too high,
Round your own form the fatal splinters fly ;
As the soft plume gives swiftness to the dart,
Good-breeding sends the satire to the heart.

YOUNG.

THE OLD

THE NEW PATHEMOR

CHAPTER I.

My strict hand

Was made to seize on vice ; and with a gripe
Squeeze out the humour of such spongy souls
As lick up every idle vanity.

BEN JONSON.

It is vain that we fill our libraries with reams of paper, encased in bindings of parchment, goat-skin, or calf-skin—and blotched with ink after the dialect of Greeks and Romans, Hebrews or Assyrians,—French, English, Italian, German, Spanish, or Sclavonic,—to prove to our sons and grandsons, classically and romantically, logically and rhapsodically, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit ; that man is made to mourn, and that the sage begins to live only by preparing to die. There is a season for all things. It is not till

the fall of the leaf we begin to anticipate winter; the satiety of experience alone lends authenticity to the axioms of the preacher; and all the philosophy of ancient and modern professors united, will scarcely persuade a young man of one-and-twenty but that "pleasure is a very pleasant thing;"—Falernian and Champagne superior to spring water,—pine-apples to pumpkins,—a blood-mare to a Welsh pony,—a picture gallery to a conventicle,—a German orchestra to a singing gallery of village psalmody,—more particularly if these lessons of ancient wisdom should be perused in a modern easy chair, in a luxurious library of carved oak lighted by stained windows or Parker's reading lamps,—with a favourite spaniel dozing on the rug, and a tchibouque or cigar-case lying on an adjoining table. These, our sons and our grandsons, are well aware that

There are more things in Heaven and Earth
Than are dreamt of in mere philosophy;

and we close our admonitions where we might have as well begun, by bequeathing them to

the sharp schooling of experience ;—tiring out their evil propensities like those of a runaway horse, by giving free way to their impetuosity.

Sir Francis Norton was a very fine young man when the bonfires blazed at Norton Park in honour of the attainment of his majority. He had some satisfaction in making his parting bow to his private tutor, and shaking hands with the two guardians appointed by his father, in token of their secession from office. He was now not only his own master, but master of five or six thousand a year, landed property, in one of the choicest counties in England ; and endowed, moreover, with personal accomplishments and faculties, such as might have secured his election to be chief of a tribe of roving Indians :—six feet high, athletic, intrepid ; and (between author and reader) rash, prejudiced, and ungovernable as a Mohican.

Of his two guardians, the elder, Mr. Cheveley, a representative in parliament for forty years past of the county in which his estates were situated, was probably most alive to the faults

and frailties of his disposition, and most anxious concerning the follies they might induce. But he was a man of the old school, unversed in the characteristics of the age, and apt to measure poor Sir Francis and his sins after a somewhat obsolete standard; while his coadjutor, Lord Farnley, himself scarcely emerged from the season of youthful indiscretion, was only too ready in finding excuses for excesses similar to those in which he had so largely and so recently indulged. Although young Norton was now virtually emancipated from the authority of his guardians, the accounts of their executorship were not to be given in for a year to come; and in a formal interview with their handsome ward on his twenty-first birthday, it was amusing enough to observe the hot and cold blown upon him from the double judgment-seat of the twin consuls.

“In twelve months from this time, my dear young friend,” said old Cheveley, “we shall surrender into your hands our account of the trust delegated to us by your late lamented father. By that period, I trust to see you permanently

established on your family estates,—a husband and a father. The unsatisfactory intelligence which for some time past has reached my ears of the dissoluteness of your course of life, convinces me that nothing will serve to settle you down into a steady and serviceable member of the community so soon as a prudent matrimonial connection.”

“A year hence, my dear Norton,” said Lord Farnley, on bidding him farewell, “I shall meet you here for the general audit of our accounts. By that time, I hope, my dear fellow, to find you grown a man of the world. As soon as you have done with Oxford, you must travel. *I* will furnish you with introductions such as will render your residence abroad pleasant as well as profitable. When you come to town, you must allow me the pleasure of presenting you; and at some future period, perhaps you will also give me the satisfaction of bringing you forward in political life as the son of one of my oldest friends,—the representative of one of the most ancient families in the kingdom,—and a member of the party to which, for

the last two centuries, the name of Norton has been attached. Farewell Frank!—do not let me hear of any more tandem-matches or steeple-chases; if you *must* play the fool, do it like *un homme de bonne compagnie*, and not like *un éventé de garnison*.”

Sir Francis promised,—although he scarcely knew what; keeping to himself his opinion that Lord Farnley might have expressed his admonitions in plainer English. He admired his younger guardian as a graceful high-bred courtier; but would have scorned to mould himself after a model so elegantly effeminate. Of the two, indeed, and despite his long-windedness, the young Baronet preferred the straightforward country-gentlemanlike style of old Cheveley;—and his first measure on quitting Oxford, was to set off to Cheveley Manor for a practical lesson in the presidency of his estates and the manifold duties of his squirearchical vocation.

“The old boy has no daughter,” said Sir Francis to himself, as his travelling carriage bowled along a fine old avenue of limes that

looked gloriously green, and felt gloriously damp; "so I need not fear that his advice about settling in life arose from any selfish view. I have the autumn and winter before me; even Lord Farnley will sanction my devoting them to field sports, provided they are enjoyed in a dignified way,—*battues* and Melton, and all that sort of thing; and when the London season commences, I will go up to town and put myself under his tutorage for a month or two. I shall then have given a fair trial to both modes of life, society and seclusion, fashion and sobriety. It will be easy to decide under which influence I have derived most enjoyment; and having once determined the point, I will either marry and turn squire, or travel and turn dandy."

It would have been lucky, perhaps, for Sir Francis Norton, had his guardian's establishment afforded him a specimen of country life more consonant with the modern habits of his station in life. The family mansion of the Cheveleys was one of those few residences of importance which still exhibit the formal

characteristics of the commencement of the last century. It was built in a bottom, having a large reservoir in front, at the end of an extensive green lawn unbroken by the flower-beds and parterres now in fashion, and contrasting its bright verdure with the red brick of which the square packing-case of a house was composed. The lower half of the façade was closely covered with phyllyrea, myrtle, pyrocanthus, and other dark-leaved evergreens; while the upper stories exhibited their white stone window cases and 'parapet wall, in most unharmonious opposition to the glaring hues of the rest of the structure. Immediately under the window was a wide staring gravel walk, ornamented at intervals with clumsy garden seats and benches painted of a pale green; and with the exception of the occasional cries of the water-fowl on the pond, not a sound interrupted the torpid monotony of the scene. It wanted only a tall lady in a joseph and gypsy hat, holding a little dog by a string, to remind one of the—"View of a Gentleman's Seat"—of the last generation.

After a short interview with Mrs. Cheveley, whom he found seated at an old-fashioned mahogany table, working a strip of muslin over a paper pattern, many yards of which were lying beside her in a huge roll, (an evidence of the perseverance of her industry,) old Cheveley, who had been summoned with intelligence of the arrival of his ward, led him through the glass-doors of the hall, to bask in the oppressive sunshine of a September afternoon on one of the shadeless benches commanding a view of the house. It seemed a high gratification to the old gentleman to point out to his ward, that the manor, although kept in punctilious repair, did not vary, by the alteration of a single brick, from its original plan of erection; that not a shrub had been planted for fifty years; that the old heavy-looking timber was unimpaired in its effect by pert plantations, or belts of sticks mis-called shrubberies; that every thing was in strict keeping with the old-fashioned commodiousness and respectability of the house. No flowers — no aviaries — no conservatories — no fancy dairies — no Swiss cottages; the garden

was a mile from the house, presenting a series of red brick walls in one of the most picturesque parts of the park; and the only green-house on the premises was one of those curious structures of the last century, consisting of fifty square feet of bricks to one of glass, in which plants were buried for the winter, and allowed to spindle up in the dark, during the spring. Conscious, or rather proud that he had no lions to exhibit to his young visitor, the old gentleman took him to the stable to look at his set of fat coach-horses and favourite old mare; then returned to the house, to introduce him into a mean wainscoted apartment containing a small library of buff-bound books, and a lanky leather-covered table, blotched with ink, which he evidently regarded as a chamber secondary only in importance to the Chapel of St. Stephen's;—and, finally after pointing out a miserable mezzotint of himself, “GILES CHEVELEY, Esq. M. P. after a picture by Hoppner, painted at the request of his constituents,” which graced the chimney piece, conducted him to his own room, and left him to dress for dinner, with

the announcement that the half-hour bell had already rung.

It was very amusing,—it proved so at least to an accomplished valet de chambre, who had been recommended to Sir Francis Norton by Lord Farnley,—to observe the look of blank mortification and disappointment with which the young man threw himself into the hard dressing chair, when the old man quitted the room;—glancing on the scanty and tasteless furniture; the cold square white dimity bed, ornamented with fringe of Mrs. Cheveley's own knotting; the fireplace filled with branches of rue, and graced with a worsted hearthrug of Mrs. Cheveley's best tent-stitch. On the toilet-table, the tall narrow dressing-glass of which was decorated with sweeping draperies of muslin, the officious valet had been careful to set out a profusion of boxes and bottles of crystal and gold, belonging to his master's dressing-box, round two slender tapering cruets of peppermint and elder flower water, manufactured in the housewifely still-room of Cheveley Manor.

“What abominations have we here?” cried

Sir Francis, on perceiving the medicated vapours of his toilet table. "Pray take away this doctor's shop from among my brushes."

"You will find it necessary, Sir Francis, to give a considerable number of similar orders," said Mr. Wittenham, removing the offending decoctions with a very supercilious air, "if you wish to make either the place or the people at all like the rest of the world.—Housekeeper's apartment quite a dispensary, sir;—no newspaper allowed in the steward's room;—and when we arrived, sir, (four o'clock in the afternoon, and a very sultry September afternoon,) I found Cheveley's people drinking hot tea, and eating hot bread and butter!—Very nauseous habits!—When I resided with the Duke of Whitehaven (although two hundred miles further north) I saw nothing half so barbarous."

"Be so good as to remember, Wittenham, that *Mr.* Cheveley is my guardian and much esteemed friend; and however barbarous you may find the habits of his house, I expect my servants to conform to them."

"Oh! certainly, Sir Francis;—certainly!—I

trust sir, I know how to assort myself to all descriptions of company. I pique myself on being a citizen of the world;—seen most parts of Europe, sir, and even touched a little on Africa. When I lived with Lord Mizen, Sir Francis, we usually yachted through the summer at the Mediterranean. I recollect a devilish awkward scrape we got into at Morocco;—and” —

“ Give me my waistcoat.”

“ Mizen and I were going on shore one evening after dark, and ”—

“ Bring me my shoes.”

“ A confounded ugly-looking dog of an Algierine, who had been skulking about the landing place all the afternoon, took the opportunity of ”—

“ My pocket handkerchief.”—

“ I had already warned his lordship that I did not choose to venture on *terra firma* unless we were to be properly armed; so just as ”—

“ Have you scented it with *bouquet* ? ”

“ With lavender water, Sir Francis. And as I was observing ”—

“Open the door—that is the second bell. Recollect, Wittenham, I expect you will conduct yourself during my stay at the Manor, with respectability and decorum.”

“I am sure it will be bringing coals to Newcastle,” was the valet’s rejoinder, as he closed the door after his young master. “There is respectability and decorum in this same mansion of Cheveley Manor, enough to stock half a dozen families of distinction. I suppose we shan’t stay long. A young man like Sir Francis, just come to his estate, and years of indiscretion, will be apt to have quite enough of respectability and decorum in the course of a week ;—so I shall just let fly a line to Farnley’s people, to let them know how things are going on.”

CHAPTER II.

A serving man is one of the makings up of a gentleman as well as his clothes. He is indeed wholly his master's ;—of his faction, of his cut, of his pleasures. He is one that keeps the best company, and is none of it; for he knows all the gentlemen his master knows, and picks from thence some hawking and horse-racing terms to swagger withal.

BISHOP EARLE.

AT the close of the fourth day passed at the Manor, Mr. Wittenham's conjectures were amply confirmed; for Sir Francis, instead of reproving as before the flippancy of his comments on the establishment, was ready to laugh at, and even join in his sarcasms. Already the tediousness of his guardian and the formality of Mrs. Cheveley had bored him out of all his sentiments of reverence; and not even the ex-

cellent sport afforded by the Cheveley preserves, could repay him for the annoyance of restricting his own movements to the old man's shuffling pace, equestrian and pedestrian;—of receiving perpetual advice as to the mode of handling his gun or biting his horse;—of playing audience to his interminable harangues in the justice room, and partner to his evening game of backgammon;—of listening to an oft-told tale of the origin and progress of a favourite rheumatic fever;—of hearing the *St. James's Chronicle* read aloud during breakfast;—of drinking fat home-brewed ale, and eating fat home-fed mutton;—of inhabiting a house where a cigar was held to be a sacrilegious pollution;—of having his pet spaniel banished to the kennel, and his favourite valet refused access to the preserves.

Worse, too, remained behind. Bad as were the first four days, the fifth promised an increase of evils. Mr. Cheveley, having reached the end of his personal anecdotes, was already beginning them all over again, with a *variorum* edition of the rheumatic fever; and Mrs. Cheveley an-

nounced to him that they had invited a party of country neighbours to do him honour.

“ We shall have Sir Stephen and Lady Laxton.”

“ The old gentleman I met riding with Mrs. Cheveley the other day?—Has he any family?”—

“ A son, married and settled in Devonshire.”

“ And no daughter?”—

“ No daughter. And then we expect Mr. and Mrs. Homerton Frobishyre.”

“ The Frobishyre Abbey people?—*They*, I fancy, have several daughters.”

“ All married and gone away. And Lord and Lady Loring are coming, and their eldest son.”

“ And have *they* no young ladies in the family?”

“ None that I ever heard of. Let me see ! That will be (two and two are)—four,—and the Loring seven, with our three selves, ten ; a charming little sociable party.”

“ Charming ! ”—mechanically repeated Sir Francis Norton ; his mind unconsciously revolving with regret, the strange paucity of the

female moiety of the creation apparent in the neighbourhood of Cheveley.

Nor did his sense of the deficiency diminish when the arrival of the "little sociable party" gave to view a Lady Laxton of the shape and almost the dimensions of a bison; a Lady Loring who squinted abominably, and a Mrs. Homerton Frobishyre, whose teeth extended a chevaux-de-frise over one of the most venomous tongues in the three kingdoms.

"Hecate and the three Witches!" muttered the yatching citizen of the world, as he stood napkin in hand behind his master's chair, "Heaven be praised we have no chance of picking up a Lady Norton in *this* part of the country." And he tried to interest himself in a discourse carrying on between his master and a lumpish Mr. Loring (an individual having a table-cloth twisted round his thick throat by way of a cravat, and a pair of black kerseymere tights with corded black silk stockings) touching the quantity of game killed, killing, and to be killed, within twenty miles distance. But Mr. Wittenham, having lived in the Duke of

Whitehaven's establishment where certain preserves were expressly set aside for the sport of the valetocracy, found this bare imagination of a feast extremely tantalizing; and, after seeing his master safely embarked in a plate of sallad, he gave his attention to some very indignant sallies, in which Mrs. Homerton Frobishyre was indulging touching a certain Mrs. Woodford, who seemed to be a country neighbour, and well known to the rest of the party.

“I really have no patience with that woman,” said Mrs. Frobishyre. “There is something to me very unnatural in living among every-day people and every-day scenes, in an every-day house, with an every-day fortune, and fancying oneself so angelically superior to the rest of the world. Talk to Mrs. Woodford of some notorious atrocity, or of some person who has outraged decency in a flagrant manner, and she will shake her head incredulously, and tell you, ‘she had rather not believe it.’ As if her withholding *her* faith, would influence the fact one way or other!”

“But then, you know, my dear Mrs. Fro-

bishyre, it makes her so vastly interesting !” said Lady Loring spitefully. “ *Her* purity of mind is such a reflection upon you or I, or any other wicked wayward persons who choose to walk through life with their eyes open. Just hear how the men talk, and even pretend to think of Mrs. Woodford.”

“ And Sybella is such a very immaculate young lady !” sneered Lady Laxton ; “ and shuts her eyes so determinately upon all *naughty* doings—”

“ I hope not !” cried Lord Loring with a hearty laugh. “ Sybella Woodford’s eyes are a devilish deal too handsome to admit of being closed. We can’t spare them,—eh ! Frobishyre ?—*can* we Frobishyre ? ”

“ Really, my Lord,” quavered the terrified husband of Mrs. Frobishyre, whose tenacity on points of conjugal prerogative was such as to provoke the malicious interference of every man in the county to draw down upon him the tornadoes of his wife’s displeasure. “ I don’t see what I have to do with Miss Woodford, or her

eyes, any more than your lordship, or any other of the circle of her friends ; and I—”

“ Mr. Frobishyre ! ”—interrupted Mrs. H. F. in a silencing voice, “ Mrs. Cheveley has asked you three times to carve the turkey.”

“ Don’t agitate yourself so, my dear fellow ; you look as if you were going to be cut up yourself,” cried Lord Loring mischievously. I declare the mere mention of pretty little Sybella’s name quite oversets you.”

“ Really, my Lord—”

“ Well, never mind !—I dare say my friend Mrs. Frobishyre will excuse you ; particularly if I am good-natured enough not to peach about that morning I met you leading Sybel’s pony through the gorse on Goldington Green.”

“ On my word, Lord Loring, since you think proper to—”

“ *I* think proper ? Believe me I thought it any thing but proper,—on the contrary, very *improper*. You may remember I told Sybella so at the time. But she only showed me her white teeth and pretty dimples, and said your

commander-in-chief would forgive you for being absent half an hour without leave."

While Mrs. Homerton Frobishyre was swelling and reddening with suppressed indignation, Sir Francis, whose attention had been as much attracted as that of his valet, began to ponder over these things in his heart. It was sufficiently plain that, however dull Mrs. Cheveley's sociable party, however solitary the rides to which he was instigated by his guardian, there *did* exist within visiting distance of the Manor, a young lady with a pretty name, having pretty dimples, pretty teeth, pretty eyes, and a pony,—whether pretty or ugly was very little to the purpose. Moreover Mrs. Frobishyre (whom he had already inscribed on his private list of antipathies) declared her to be a saint, and hinted her to be a hypocrite; while Lord Loring, who, like most stout gentlemen, was somewhat apt to wax facetious and play the wag, evidently believed her capable of quizzing Homerton F. and his dictatorial spouse. It was a consolation to Norton to learn all this, as he was in common politeness bound to extend his visit to another week or

ten days ; but even while comforting himself with the prospect of being allowed to guide this Miss Sybella Somebody-or-other's pony through the gorse of Goldington Green, he could not but think it odd that the Cheveleys had hitherto abstained, and, as it would appear, *carefully* abstained, from mentioning the mysterious fair one in his presence.

“ *Who* is this Miss Woodman ? ”—he inquired in a low voice of his heavy neighbour, young Loring, unwilling to attract his guardian's attention.

“ I beg your pardon ? ”—

“ I only inquired who this Miss Woodstone happens to be ? ”

“ *Woodford*—Miss Woodford, you mean, I fancy. Mr. Cheveley—it is Miss Woodford surely of whom you are talking, and concerning whom your friend Sir Francis is inquiring ? ”

“ Yes,—Miss Sybella Woodford,” replied the old man ; proceeding with his operation upon a fine haunch, without adding a word of information.

“ Miss Sybella Woodford is a very amiable young woman who resides with her mother in

this neighbourhood," said Loring, supplying the deficiency.

"An only daughter, I presume?"

"I rather think Mrs. Woodford is a widow. Mr. Cheveley, perhaps you can tell us? This Mrs. Woodford, about whom Sir Francis is questioning me, is a widow, is she not?"

"A widow.—Mr. Loring, a glass of wine?"

"With pleasure." "And Miss Sybella an only daughter?"

"An only daughter. Your health. Yes, Sir Francis; as I told you, an only daughter. But I dare say, Mrs. Cheveley, you can tell us more about Mrs. and Miss Woodford than any other person, seeing so much of them as you do. Sir Francis Norton wishes very much to know on which side of Goldington Green they are to be found, and whether Mrs. Woodford is in the habit of admitting morning visitors. Perhaps Mr. Homer-ton Frobishyre we ought to apply to *you*?—*Do the Woodfords admit morning visitors?*"—

Sir Francis was satisfied. Eager as he was to silence the talking automaton he had thus wound

up to loquacity he felt that the officious Loring had now drawn Mrs. Homerton Frobishyre on his shoulders, and that his punishment would be tantamount to his offence.

But if the young Baronet was indeed satisfied, Mr. Cheveley was much more so. He perceived that Norton's interest was already strongly excited by their allusions to his

Cynosure of neighbouring eyes,

and this was exactly the state of things he had been cunningly plotting to accomplish. Ever since his ward was fifteen, and Sybella Woodford twelve, it had been the darling wish of old Cheveley's heart that they should become attached and united; and wisely conjecturing that, to accomplish this, it was desirable Sir Francis Norton should not only never suspect the pre-existence of the project, but not expose himself to the precarious growth of a love which might perhaps burn to extinction ere the moment for crowning it arrived, had forborne ever to allude to Sybella in his presence; had commanded Mrs. Cheveley to abstain from inviting them during Norton's visit;—satisfied that be-

tween two young persons of *their* age and accomplishments, there exists sufficient animal magnetism to ensure their meeting within a week of Sir Francis's arrival at the manor. Having artfully laid the springe and watched the event, he was now satisfied that the bird was fairly limed; and had no more doubt that his ward would be wandering in Cheveley gorse on the morrow, or pricking his palfrey round Goldington Green, than he had that his poor friend Frobishyre was predestined that very night to a certain lecture, which nothing but the force of habit could enable him to endure with resignation.

CHAPTER III.

Let me see !

To be a Baron is no such great matter
As people take 't.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

“VERY singular individuals, sir, those monsters who quitted us this morning !” said Wittenham, as he was assisting his master to undress the following night.

“Beautiful !” cried Sir Francis, to the great surprize of his valet. But Wittenham was too well accustomed to the rapid changes and emendations introduced into the English language by those two important classes to whom the conservation of the slang dialect is delegated, (fellow-commoners and hackney-coachmen,) to be

long startled by any use or abuse of his native tongue.

“Beautiful indeed, sir!” reiterated he,—satisfied that this was the last Long’s Hotel designation of the tiger kind. “Never saw finer specimens of the native.”

“Such a foot!” cried Sir Francis, kicking off his French-polished shoe.

“Why indeed, Sir Francis,” rejoined the valet, satisfied that his master’s admiration was excited by the symmetry of his own, “my friend Meyer says he has not such another last in his shop as yours; and that one of the opera-dancers having strolled in, and chanced to take up your shoe—”

“What the devil are you talking about?” exclaimed the young Baronet, with very little regard to the personal dignity of his accomplished valet.

“You were saying, Sir Francis, that you never beheld such a foot as”—

“Ay—ay!” interrupted the disconcerted Norton, vexed to find how nearly he had been moved to betray the interest secretly excited in

his mind; and by way of diverting the prying Wittenham's attention from the subject, he suddenly inquired the distance from Cheveley Manor to Loring Park.

"Good God!—Sir Francis," exclaimed the valet, aghast; "you surely don't think of visiting those people?"—

"And why not?"—cried Norton, satisfied that he had started a new hare.

"You have no conception, sir, how horribly we should be bored among the Lorings."

"In what way?—They seem very good sort of people."

"Exactly so, sir. My Lord and Lady Loring *are* precisely what may be called good sort of people. But what business have such persons among the aristocracy?—A few years ago, sir, while they were still Sir Harbottle and Lady Loring, there could not be a more estimable couple, or a more 'beautiful' specimen of the kill-your-own-mutton species of English country-gentlemen. They lived on their own estate ten months of the year, and came to town during the other two, (for the 'Ancient Music,' and a

little dowager humdrummery,) to a great lumbering house somewhere near Grosvenors-square, whenever they had a daughter to present.

“Indeed!”—said Sir Francis, inexpressibly amused by the supercilious finery of the gentleman of the boot-jack.

“I leave it to you, sir, what such a man as Sir Harbottle had to do with the peerage;—unpresentable in person—(a mere Hottentot, as you must have perceived); limited in estate (they assure me he has not above ten or twelve thousand a year); a mere upstart in family—(the family never heard of I’m told before Cromwell’s time); it was really madness in him to abandon the respectable vocation of Squire and take up that of a Lord, which does not become him, and which he does not become.”

“Admirably argued!” cried Sir Francis, eager to amuse himself with valetocratic philosophy. “And what is the result?”

“The result is, sir, that this gimcrack Lord is despised all over the neighbourhood. In point of fact, you see, Sir Francis, this neighbourhood (I speak it not in any disrespect to that worthy

gentleman Mr. Cheveley, who is a man of very old family—I have known how to appreciate Mr. Cheveley, sir, ever since I noticed the old brass monuments over the servants' pew in the church) but in point of fact, it is *not* a neighbourhood of nobility. Nothing but squires and baronets within thirty miles round. And if the reports of the steward's room are correct, nothing could be more agreeable and friendly than the footing on which they all lived together;—well meaning people, sir!—ate their roast beef and mince-pies together at Christmas without ostentation or competition.”

“And can they not do so now, though poor Loring has dropped the Harbottle of his name?—What difference does his coronet make to *them*?”

“Every difference, sir. They fancied he wanted to set himself up above his neighbours; and when he returned from London, a Lord,—took every pains to mortify him. Sharp things were said among them at that time; and the same cordiality has never existed since. But that is by no means the worst of it.”

“And what is the worst of it?”

“Between ourselves, sir, poor Loring is cursedly dipped. A baronet is rich with twelve thousand a year,—a peer, damned poor!—People who are satisfied to make Frobishyre or Cheveley pay half a guinea, choose to have a sovereign from my lord. Loring was the first man in this part of the county till he chose to go into a rank of life beyond his means;—and now, sir, mortgage after mortgage, annuity after annuity, fall of timber after fall of timber, have done their worst for him. The gilding of his whipper-snapper coronet has cost him dear; he is despised by his own people,—hated by his neighbours; and though my lord laughs louder at his own vulgar jokes in proportion as his heart aches, take my word for it, Sir Francis (as his own man plainly says), Loring’s an unhappy man!”

“And pray,” said the baronet, who had not been listening to his tirade for the last five minutes,—“who are those Woodfords who live at a place near the keeper’s lodge?”

“A little citizen’s villa sort of a place, eh! sir?—an owl’s nest overgrown with ivy?”

“A very pretty cottage called Thorngrove.—I fancy they visit here. Mrs. Cheveley talks of having them to dine in a day or two.”

“Does she, sir?”—said the valet, with most unconcerned *insouciance*, little imagining how eagerly his master’s heart was beating with curiosity. “In all probability they are not county people, for I know nothing whatever about them.—Call you at the usual hour to-morrow, Sir Francis?”—

“Of course.”

“Choose to have the lamp left burning, sir?”—

“No,—go to bed. I want nothing more to-night!”

Notwithstanding this declaration, however, Sir Francis did want something more.—He wanted further intelligence of the charming Sybella, or no chance of sleep for him. Contrary to Mrs. Cheveley’s expectations, instead of going wandering about in the neighbourhood of Thorngrove, peeping over hedges, or trespassing in defiance of steel traps and spring guns, into shrubberies, Sir Francis had expressed in plain gentlemanly English his desire to have a

sight of the neighbours so much the objects of Mrs. Homerton Frobishyre's antipathy as Mrs. Woodford and her daughters; and having proposed calling on them in the course of their morning's ride—a proposal met with a thousand objections by the cunning old gentleman,—it ended with Mr. Cheveley and his ward finding themselves seated about luncheon time, in a pretty, cool, green-looking drawing-room shaded by a deep verandah, so as to leave a western view towards a lawn covered with beds and clusters and pyramids of rich geraniums; and littered with the usual picturesque accessories of youth, beauty, and accomplishment;—pianoforte and harp, drawing-easel, work-table, and bouquets and china baskets without end. Sir Francis was enchanted. It was just the shrine at which to worship a goddess of eighteen summers,—it was just the local habitation for a heroine of modern romance.

There was, however, nothing of the slightest tendency to romance in the appearance of either Mrs. Woodford or her daughter. The mother, who was occupied in writing letters on their

entrance, was remarkable for nothing but a mild tone of voice and a subdued manner, as of a person who has wrestled with the world and found the encounter too much for her; and as to Sybella, she was as undeserving to figure in heroic story, as a very pretty girl could well be. Her hair, instead of floating in picturesque disorder, or "waving in natural ringlets over a brow of alabaster," was neatly arranged, (evidently with the aid of papillotes and her maid,) according to the prevailing fashion, and her dress, although formed of the white muslin correctly proper to the occasion, instead of being gathered into a tunic, was made in an elegant manner very much resembling that of the young ladies of Paris and London. She was, it is true, a distinguished looking girl, with considerable beauty and considerable grace; but so far from blushing celestial rosy red at sight of the "youthful stranger," or "stammering a few incoherent sentences indicative of the newly felt emotions throbbing within her heart," she received them with easy good breeding; found a great deal to say to Mr. Cheveley, quite as much as was necessary to his ward; and,

taking them into the drawing-room while her mother finished her letter to be in time for the post-bag and Lord Loring's frank, distributed the partridge-pie and apricot-tart with as much disinterested impartiality, as if Sir Francis had not been an unmarried baronet of the date of 1620, with a fortune of six thousand a year. Nay, when Mr. Cheveley, in pursuance of a project preconcerted with his wife, pressed Mrs. Woodford to dine at the manor on the following day and pass a day or two with them, instead of preserving a dignified or sentimental silence, Sybella eagerly entreated her mother to accede to the plan, and freely admitted that she should of all things like the expedition.

“I have been taught a new way of cultivating heaths,” said she; “and in my zeal for the interests of horticulture and for pleasing old Pearmain, I am dying to get to the manor to instruct your gardener in the mystery.”

Mr. Cheveley cared very little *why* she wanted to come, since the expression of her wishes instantly determined her mother to accept the invitation; and so rapidly did the intimacy

between Sybella and Sir Francis proceed over the apricot-tart while she was showing off to her old friend Mr. Cheveley a beautiful new lory with which the heath-propagating friend from the Cape had just presented her, that he found courage to acknowledge at parting how very much delighted he was at the prospect of her visit to the manor on the morrow.

The morrow came (a cheerful Autumn day), and with it the two ladies in the Thorngrove pony phaeton. Sir Francis, who had found Miss Woodford so enchanting in her morning dress of white muslin, found her far more so in her dinner dress of white silk; and as no attempt was made to show her off by her judicious host and hostess, as she was suffered to sit quite still, looking very elegant and pretty all the evening, falling naturally to the share of the baronet, while her mother chatted with Mr. and Mrs. Cheveley, they managed to acquire before the supper tray made its appearance, a very tolerable insight into each other's sentiments on general topics. Sir Francis acknowledged his preference of a country life; Miss Woodford admitted

that, having seen but little of London, she should like to see more:—Sir Francis declared his partiality for his own county, and his intention of settling there for the winter and he hoped *many* winters to come, while Sybella pleaded guilty to a roving disposition, and hinted that her only wish was to visit the continent:—Sir Francis protested that he was a bigot to English music and detested the German Opera; his companion plainly declared that she liked nothing but Mozart and Beethoven:—Sir Francis thought the Scotch novels overrated, and could not perceive the merit of writing in a barbarous and incomprehensible dialect; Miss Woodford was equally certain that Scott was secondary in genius to Shakspeare alone, and protested that her admiration of Sir Walter amounted almost to idolatry:—and yet, with all this discrepancy of opinion, Sir Francis rose to open the drawing-room door for Miss Woodford's exit for the night, with the persuasion that he had found a kindred soul; that their opinions were perfectly congenial: that *she* was the loveliest girl, and he the luckiest dog on earth. It

was so fortunate that he had paid his elder guardian the respect of visiting him, in preference to Lord Farnley, or that he had not flown off in a day or two, scared by the intolerable dulness of Cheveley Manor! And, after all, he had very much exaggerated the faults and deficiencies of the place. The house was only what every country house in the kingdom had appeared half a century before; and as to his guardian and the old lady, they were sterling people;—a little dull to be sure;—but perfectly well principled and inoffensive.

In these opinions, nevertheless, he could by no means persuade Mr. Wittenham to concur. The fine gentleman of the steward's room could not be brought to see, or at least to confess, that the arrival of the Woodfords had wrought much amendment in the uneventful monotony of the squire's house. They had brought with them no servant out of livery; their female attendant was an old widow, who had been nurse to Miss Sybella; and the utmost commendation he was moved to bestow on the family was,—“A pretty girl, that little Wood-

ford, sir ;—fresh as a flower,—but a total want of *ton*.”

In the course of four-and-twenty hours, he had a great deal more to say, and a great deal of fault to find ; for among the five eternal passions his master had struggled through during the six months he had entertained Mr. Wittenham as valet, the flirtation visible to the whole house on the pea-green settee on the grass-green lawn, concealed only by Miss Woodford’s olive-green parasol, assumed decidedly the most alarming and matrimonial aspect. Instead of taking his usual afternoon’s ride, Sir Francis insisted upon sharing with old Pearmain Sybella’s instructions in the greenhouse ; and as it was the first time for a week he had been seen loitering about the house between breakfast and dinner time, the housekeeper’s room began to look grave on the matter.

The next day, things became still more awful. The pony had been sent for ; and Miss Woodford accompanied her old friend and her new, to visit the ruins of an ancient castle in the neighbourhood ; concerning the existence of

which Mr. Cheveley had never breathed a syllable to his ward, till there was an opportunity for him to ride leisurely by Sybella's side through the beautiful hazel copses, where the robins were singing among showers of falling leaves; where the fern waved almost breast high; where the fragrance of wild honeysuckles still betrayed the lingering breath of summer; where Sir Francis quoted Byron,—Miss Woodford, Voss. Both were poetically disposed; and old Cheveley was careful to loiter several hundred yards behind, in order to keep the observant eyes of the groom still further in the rear. Sir Francis tore down a branch of flowering ivy, as they passed a withered oak. Miss Woodford hung it to her saddle, and twisted it into her hair when she dressed for dinner. She looked handsomer that day than the day before; and old Cheveley took care that the young people should pass the whole evening side by side, looking over Flaxman's designs from Homer and Sophocles.

The following morning had been, from the first, fixed for the Woodfords' return home;

and old Cheveley, from first to last, had determined that the arrangement should take effect. Yet, although Wittenham had insinuated that morning during the progress of his toilet, that they were a most wretched description of persons,—(the old woman keeping the key of the store-room, and the young one being lady president of half a dozen Dorcas Societies,) Sir Francis persisted in giving his guardian to understand, in pretty plain terms, that the Manor would lose all its attraction in his eyes by losing Sybella ; and that if he persisted in letting them depart, he would be very soon left *tête-à-tête* with the old lady. But the old gentleman knew better. *He* knew that if his ward could scarcely make up his mind to live at the distance of a mile and a half from the goddess in the muslin gown, he was very unlikely to find courage for a long journey from the neighbourhood; and without giving a moment's heed to Norton's irritation and petulance, saw the pony phaeton come round to the glass-door, handed Sybella into the vehicle, and, having lingered a moment on the lawn to applaud the excellence

of Mrs. Cheveley's coachwomanship, walked calmly off to the home farm, leaving poor Frank stretched at lover's length on one of the pea-green benches.

The Squire found that every thing was in excellent train ; and had no more doubt of seeing his favourite Sybella installed as mistress of Norton Park before the commencement of the winter, than he had of finding the estimable Mrs. Cheveley presiding over her roll of satin stitch, on his return from his walk.

Had Sir Francis's prime vizier, the great Mr. Wittenham, been at all suspicious of the vile conspiracy in progress against himself (for he considered his master only as a subordinate part of himself), he would not quietly have passed the evening seated in Byronic misanthropy on the parapet wall of the horsepond, with a cigar between his scornful lips.

CHAPTER IV.

The house she dwelt in was a sacred shrine ;
Her chamber window did surpass in glory
The portals of the dawn ; all paradise
Could, by the simple opening of a door
Let itself in upon him ; pathways, walks
Swarm'd with enchantment.

WORDSWORTH.

FROM that day, nothing could be more clear than that the high respect entertained by Sir Francis Norton for his guardian and the old lady, had determined him to adjourn *sine die* his departure from the manor. Nay, so eager was he to render himself serviceable to the venerable Mrs. Cheveley, that no market-porter ever rendered himself more cheerfully a beast of burden than did the young Baronet. Every day, and sometimes even twice a day, he volunteered his services to carry books, patterns, flowers, music, messages, between Cheveley Manor and

Thorngrove; and if, in reward for his activity, Miss Woodford *did* occasionally favour him with an air on the harp, or a ballad with the guitar, no one could doubt that his efforts were completely disinterested.

It must be admitted that the green drawing-room was a very charming place for falling in love:—a delightful retreat after the glaring discomfort of the treeless lawn and great square parlour at the manor;—that the books and birds, music and flowers, and above all, the tone of easy sociability at Thorngrove, were very delightful. There was a modest simplicity about Sybella; an air of quiet, ladylike, self-concentration about the mother; and a spirit of orderliness in the whole establishment, from which Sir Francis inferred wonders of the principles and predilections of the family.

“She likes things exactly as *I* like them,” mused young Norton, as he walked his horse leisurely across Goldington Green, on his way to carry back to Mrs. Cheveley some bodkin, or stiletto, or other nonsensicality she had borrowed of her friend. “I am able to offer her at Nor-

ton precisely such a home as Thorngrove, on a better scale; and she will be happy there, and—" Had not his horse stumbled in a rabbit burrow, his contemplations might have been pursued much further; but his momentary pause gave time to Mr. and Mrs. Homerton Frobishyre's phaeton to cross him at the turnpike.

" Good morning, Sir Francis," said a chuckling voice, much resembling the tenor of the demon chorus in Robert le Diable. " I thought it was *you*, coming out of the Thorngrove gates. Mr. Frobishyre would have it that it was Quinsey on his way to purr away an hour at Cheveley; but I said directly—' No! it is Sir Francis Norton coming from his matin devotions.' "

" You were very kind to recognise me at such a distance," said Norton, touching his horse with the intention of escaping.

" Very *discriminating* at all events; for we are pretty well accustomed to see gentlemen of all shapes, sizes, and dimensions, make their exits and their entrances through those eventful gates. It is not written there, however, as perhaps it ought to be, '*Lasciate ogni speranza*,

voi ch'entrate!" Miss Sybella takes care that every one shall *hope* in turn, till it suits her fancy to reduce him to despair.—Poor Mr. Loring!"—

"*Poor* Mr. Loring?" reiterated Sir Francis, trying to look unconcerned. "Did *he* only suit Miss Woodford's fancy in the way you mention?—I wonder at that! He is such a remarkably gay, lively, intellectual, irresistible young man."

"He is Lord Loring's son, in the first place; which might really entitle him to some little show of respect from such people as the Woodfords. And in the next—"

"I am sorry I must defer hearing the next, Mrs. Frobishyre, till I have the pleasure of seeing you again," said Sir Francis, perceiving that the lady was waxing prosy as well as censorious; "I fear, as it is, I shall be too late for Mr. Cheveley's punctual dinner hour." And away he went; leaving the irate lady to wreak the residue of her wrath upon the meek-spirited individual by her side.

The hapless steed of the young Baronet pro-

bably discovered in the course of the next half mile, that Mrs. Frobishyre's sarcasms had not been launched in vain; that his master was piqued to the very soul. Never had Sir Francis performed the distance from Goldington Green to Cheveley Manor, at a pace so much resembling his usual rate of speed from Cheveley manor to Goldington Green. He fancied indeed, that he was only angry with the odious Mrs. Homerton Frobishyre; and had any one asserted that it was Sybella herself who moved his indignation, he certainly would have rebutted the charge.

Sybella, however, it certainly was!—She, with her ingenuous air and muslin frock, to turn out a flirt—a coquette!—and to have flirted and coquetted with even such a *caput mortuum* of beef and beer, as the squireling Loring!—a mere boor,—an animal with no more intelligence than one of the stone lions on his father's park gates! —“Such people as the So-and-soes,” is at all times a most disparaging and mortifying mode of mention,—and he had been ready to repay Mrs. Frobishyre with a cut of his whip, for

having presumed to apply such a phrase to the ladies of Thorngrove; but now, he was very glad she had done so;—very glad that she had spoken of them despitely;—very glad that—No!—if the truth must be told, Sir Francis Norton was just at that moment *glad* of nothing in the world!—

In this mood he dressed for dinner. In this mood he listened, and for the first time for three weeks, to the tissue of impertinencies with which Wittenham was in the habit of favouring him, touching the Thorngrove family. The valet had been passing the morning at the Loring's, for a day's shooting with the butler; and now unwittingly confirmed Mrs. Frobishyre's insinuation, by declaring how delighted all "Loring's people" were that the match had come to nothing between their young master and the little girl at Thorngrove. "Nothing," he said, "could be more unsatisfactory to a domestic than the service of small gentry, like the Woodfords;—people who were neither one thing nor the other,—who knew nothing of the world, and were totally unknown in it;—people who paid

their bills with that sort of petty regularity, so annoying to tradesmen on a respectable scale—”

“ People, in short, who have no steward’s room, and no Mr. Wittenham,” interrupted his master. “ Mrs. Woodford’s husband, however, was a Baronet’s son : who, dying young and without heirs male, left only a limited fortune to his widow and child ; and—”

“ I dare say, Sir Francis—very probably,”—interrupted Wittenham, who was quitting the room—“ I don’t the least doubt it. I have never made any particular inquiries about them. All I meant to assert was, that Loring’s people did not want Miss Sybella ; and were mighty glad when the young man threw her over.”

It was after the sleepless night caused by these and similar assertions on the part of his Mephistopheles, that Sir Francis opened his eyes in the morning to peruse an epistle bearing Lord Farnley’s frank. The moment was only too propitious. Sir Francis was just then thoroughly out of humour with Thorngrove, thoroughly bored at Cheveley, thoroughly anxious to revenge himself by getting away,—and

going he cared not whither. He wanted active movement,—he wanted change; and without the slightest feeling of resentment proceeded to peruse his younger guardian's reproofs and remonstrances.

DEAR FRANK,—

Farnley Hall.

When I learned that, after a very short visit to Norton Park, you had proceeded to our excellent friend Mr. Cheveley's hospitable mansion, I felt convinced that you were eager to get rid, in the first place, of an unwelcome duty; and that, after a few days, you would find your way (according to your engagement) hither. Under these circumstances, I judged it unnecessary to trouble you with my opinion relative to the course, both political and domestic, it might be advisable for you to pursue in that quarter. Aware that the Cheveleys have no immediate heirs or relations, nothing appears more probable than that the old gentleman will bequeath to yourself, as the only son of his oldest friend, his vast estate and parsimonious hoardings; and it may therefore be highly desirable you should keep on the best possible terms with him and his wife.

But this does not by any means necessitate an adoption of their old-fashioned ways and notions: and had I seen you before you set off for the Manor, I should have judged it my duty to warn you against contracting habits of squiredom, such as might disqualify you for shining in any other sphere of society.

Unluckily, I have strangely miscalculated!— I am assured, my dear fellow (pardon me if I speak plainly on so interesting an occasion), that you are exhibiting yourself at all the lumbering festivities of the county, as a mere *fac-simile* of the old gentleman; that you are maundering away your time in Cheveley's justice-room; riding the cart-horses of his stud; eating his fat pasties, and running considerable risk of being caught in a matrimonial trap by a country-bred Miss, the squire's neighbour. Excuse me, dear Frank, for telling you that this must not, or at least ought not to be. With your fortunes and prospects, you have a right to form a very good connexion, to increase your estate, and obtain a higher standing in society. I am far from wishing to dissuade you from

matrimony. Although myself (and for few things am I more grateful to Providence) a jovial bachelor, I do not point out a similar career to yourself; for *you* have not the rank or fortune indispensable to its embellishment. All, therefore, I wish to press upon you is the eligibility of seeing more of the world before you venture on a step so decided as marriage. Remember, Norton, you have fifty happy years before you; do not run the risk of embittering them by the boyish precipitancy of rejecting my request for three months' delay, ere you tender your proposals to this damsel in the shades. I do not ask you to surmount your attachment, but merely to suspend your declaration:—you may live to thank me for the caution.

In a word, my dear boy, come to Farnley. We have a large party assembled here,—all anxious to make your acquaintance,—all eager to make their own acquaintance agreeable to you. You shall not be bored with politics more than you can bear, or with music, waltzing, and *proverbs* more than I can help. Make my

compliments and your own adieux to the Cheveleys as quickly as you can ; and come and fight over the ground of your Dulcinea's merits, inch by inch, with your faithful and affectionate servant,

FARNLEY."

The unsuspecting Baronet, entertaining not the slightest conjecture that the tidings of his *belle passion* for Miss Woodford had been conveyed to Farnley Hall in a confidential letter from his confidential gentleman to the confidential gentleman of his guardian, dreamed not that, during his perusal of the epistle, Mr. Wittenham's eyes were fixed with eager curiosity on the expression of his master's face. Nothing doubting but that a letter under cover from Lord Farnley must abound in suitable admonitions and reprehensions, the valet was enchanted to perceive that the utmost indication of Sir Francis's ire exceeded not a deep and guilty blush ; while the aspect of his handsome face, on reaching the signature, was such as to determine Wittenham on packing his portmanteau immediately after breakfast.

“As sure as fate my Lord has sent for him away ; and as sure as fate he has not the slightest objection to go,” ruminated the experienced valet, completing his arrangement of the jugs of hot water and cold, and the eau de Cologne for his master’s toilet. “I hope old Cheveley won’t put a spoke in the wheel ; for another week in this Hottentot’s wigwam would be the extinction of me.”

So far from interfering, however, in the project announced during breakfast by his ward, the squire saw in the intended journey of Sir Francis only a proper form of respect towards Lord Farnley. He was persuaded that Norton was desirous of submitting to his younger guardian his project of alliance with his beloved Sybella.

“The lad perceives,” thought the kind-hearted old man, “that he is sure of *my* consent ; that the Woodfords are all *I* can desire ; and is willing to show his father’s friend, the dandy Lord, the deference of asking his opinion. ’Tis all very right. But I hope they won’t

keep Frank long in Shropshire, or my pretty little friend will cry away all her roses.”

“ I suppose you have taken leave at Thorngrove, Frank ? ” said he with a significant smile, while Mr. Wittenham was standing beside the travelling carriage, directing two footmen how to lift in the chaise-seat and dispose the great coats.

“ No, indeed, sir,” replied his ward, hoping he was speaking nearly in his usual voice. “ I think all leave-takings, intolerable things ; and indeed when I quitted Mrs. Woodford yesterday, had no intention of visiting Shropshire so soon. Circumstances have since occurred which—that is, circumstances—or rather I should say—”

“ *I understand—I understand,*” cried Mr. Cheveley. “ Go, therefore, my dear boy, as fast as you can, and return as fast as you can. The sooner we see you back the better.”

“ You will say every thing you think necessary for me to the families here, from whom I have received so much hospitality ? ”

“ Every thing, and to every one ; not omit-

ting your foe, Mrs. Frobishyre, and your friend—whom shall I say, Frank?”

“Have you put in my guncase?” inquired the young baronet of his valet, to cut short this embarrassing scene.

“I have, Sir Francis. Every thing’s ready.”

“Farewell, then, dear sir,” cried he, pressing Mr. Cheveley’s hand. “I will write to you on my arrival at Farnley.”

The lodge gates were soon passed. It seemed but a step to Goldington; and notwithstanding the indignation still fermenting within the bosom of Sir Francis, he could not forbear casting a wistful glance at the shrubberies of Thorn-grove, in hopes to catch a glimpse of Sybella’s white draperies among the acacia trees. It would even have been satisfactory to him had her favourite Persian greyhound, who was suspected of a tendency for poaching, made his appearance in the adjoining paddocks. But no! not a creature was to be seen; and when they had fairly cleared the bounds of the parish,—when they had attained the high road, and got beyond the reach of Cheveley associations,—Sir

Francis was glad that nothing had occurred to shake his purpose. For the last five weeks he had seen Miss Woodford every day; riding, walking, and talking with her, till he had fancied it impossible to ride, walk, or talk with any other woman. He had often blamed himself, (after a long stroll with her among the green coppices, or after a family dinner at Thorngrove, and the evening passed in listening to her music, or requiting it by reading aloud to her mother and herself the last new work from town,)—he had often blamed himself for lack of decision or lack of courage in failing to give some slight indication of his attachment. “So intimate as I am with both Mrs. Woodford and Sybella,” thought he, “I have never yet breathed a syllable that can induce them to suspect I regard them with more interest than such people as the Frobishyres and Lorings!”

But now, on his journey from Cheveley to Farnley—from the arctic to the antartic pole—it was to this very delicacy and reserve he reverted with the greatest satisfaction.

“Had I been rash enough to give Miss

Woodford any insight into my feelings," said he to himself, in sullen soliloquy, "what an endless number of explanations might I not have been compelled to offer, concerning the motives of my change of sentiment! And then, the ignominy of adverting to her flirtation—her—her—what shall I call it?—with that brute Loring. I could not have stood such a mortification. And now, thank Heaven!—I have nothing to reproach myself with. I have never uttered a word to Miss Woodford that could induce her to fancy I ever intended to offer her my hand; and thus I escape the hazard, the more than hazard, of becoming husband to a jilt and coquette. After all, Sybella only loses the triumph of adding another name to her list of rejected suitors."

It is surprising, however, in spite of all this philosophy, of all Mr. Frobishyre's inuendoes and Wittenham's false witnessing, how often he found occasion, during his two days' journey, to revert to Thorngrove, its ways, and its inhabitants. Once or twice, he all but determined to turn back and decide the question at once, by

a strict investigation of Sybella's conduct in the Loring affair; and either proposing to her to become his wife, or taking a final farewell. The fear of being sneered at by Wittenham and quizzed by the Frobishyres, alone arrested his movements.

“I will, at all events, comply with Lord Farnley's request,” cried he at last, finding that he had advanced too far to return without incurring the charge of gross inconsistency. “Farnley is in the right. At present I know nothing of society. I have fallen in love with the first pretty girl who has fallen in my way, and found it worth while to make herself agreeable.—Why marry yet?—Why marry at all?—What so independent as a bachelor's life? What so revolting as the condition of a Homer-ton Frobishyre!” And he went on, railing at Cupid and Hymen, love and matrimony, till the turrets of Farnley rose in all their grandeur before his eyes.

CHAPTER V.

They talk of fevers that infect the brains,
But nonsense is the new disease that reigns.

DRYDEN.

LOVE is proverbially the blindest and most blind-making of deities. Sir Francis Norton's auspicious acquaintance with the Thorngrove family had suddenly blinded him to the dullness, opacity, and torpor of Cheveley Manor. From the moment of his connection with the Woodfords, Mrs. Homerton Frobyshire had found it impossible to extort from him a single sarcasm against the quaint obsolescence of the place; and he had grievously offended Lady Loring by asserting that the old family-mansion aspect of the Manor was far preferable to the modern gothic, or pert attempts at

classicism, exhibited in certain new seats of the new nobility. He had, in short, blinded himself as completely in this respect, as in that of fancying that no demonstration had escaped him of his predilection for Sybella.

But scarcely did his carriage pass through the grand archway of Farnley, when the scales seemed to fall from his eyes. Amid the stir and bustle of his fashionable guardian's splendid residence, he felt as if breathing a new atmosphere, and mingling with a higher order of beings. It is the custom of right-thinking people to enlarge upon the respectable air of an ancient mansion, with its gray-headed servitors; but experience proves that the gray-headed servitors, from long indulgence in habits of steward's-room sensuality, are generally deaf, blind, and inactive. Instead, therefore, of two or three old men, heavy with forty years freedom of the ale cellar, and totally unversed in the refinements of modern life, the young Baronet found himself received and ushered into the library by smart, active, well-bred servants; marshalled by a groom of the

chambers with the manners and appearance of a gentleman, by whom their movements were regulated with the glance and nod of an Olympian Jupiter. It was already half past five, the dinner hour of the manor; but he was informed that, at Farnley, he had two hours to spare before the ringing of the dressing bell.—The prospect was somewhat alarming to a man recently experienced in the taciturn formality of Mrs. Cheveley's drawing-room during the fatal half hour preceding dinner!—

But Sir Francis had not even leisure to turn for amusement to the new publications with which the tables were covered, or to a portfolio of new engravings lying on a rack near the sofa. Within a quarter of an hour of his arrival, Lord Farnley (with two gentlemen whom he introduced to his ward as Lord Glendyne and Colonel Latimer) came in from his ride; and soon afterwards two very lovely women, to whom he also presented Sir Francis Norton, made their appearance from an adjoining boudoir. It was evidently the custom of the house to assemble for an hour before dinner at the

close of the morning's recreations, ere the solemnity of full-dress prevented the party from feeling and appearing at their ease. Lord Glendyne and the Colonel, complaining of a damp ride, seated themselves on a low divan near the ample fire-place; Lord Farnley and Frank, profiting by the owl-light diffused through the room, were standing together at a distant window discussing affairs which they would have found it difficult to talk about illuminated by the mighty blaze of the wood-fire; while Lady Kingcombe and her daughter Lady Margaret Enville, who had been joined by another lady and a very talkative gentleman, were assembled together on an ottoman in the centre of the room, comparing notes of their morning's amusements, and discussing the newspapers and letters of the day brought in by a late post. Every one seemed sociably inclined;—every one seemed to experience that lively flow of spirits which a growing appetite for dinner calls forth, and which the weight of three abundant courses cannot fail to extinguish. The men were not elevated into hauteur by the stiffness of their

cravats; nor were the women encouraged into pride (like the Spanish mules) by the jingling of their chains and ear-rings. For one hour, at least, of the twenty-four, the consciousness of muddy boots, and tresses discomposed by the open air, suggested to them to be natural.

“And where did you go, Madelina, after I quitted you?” inquired Lord Farnley of the graceful diminutive figure lounging beside Lady Kingcombe.

“Indeed I hardly know,” replied a sweet but languid voice. “Rowerton insisted upon taking me to see a ruined forge, which he assured me was as picturesque and romantic as the Mermaid’s well of the Ravenswoods. But, alas! the only picturesque object I beheld was his august self, wading ankle deep in the water to guide my horse across the dam in safety. You never saw any thing so chivalrous!”

“As if you were not aware,” cried Lord Farnley, “that he is cased in caoutchouc from head to heel. You are to know, Lady Kingcombe, that ever since my sister married poor Rower-

ton, satisfied beforehand of the adventures and exploits likely to be exacted by so fantastic a dame, his garments have been made waterproof with Indian rubber, and fireproof with asbestos ; under favour of which concealed armour he performs prodigies of valour in her behoof."

" Mere scandal ! " — cried Lady Madelina Rowerton, in a tone of affected pique. " Had he not been really wet to the skin, I should not have found it so easy to persuade him to go and change his clothes, and dress for dinner an hour before the first bell."

" Rowerton is at this moment writing letters for the post in my study," said Lord Farnley. " Nay," he continued, interrupting his sister as she was about to rise, and holding her playfully with both hands on the ottoman, " I will not let you stir. He has been tormented enough, poor fellow, for this morning. *Je m'en appelle à vous, mon cher Comte !* Has not Lady Madelina exhibited, since breakfast, at least ten fits of caprice more than any reasonable husband is called upon to endure ? "

" Miladi has condescend be var' provoking,"

said Count Hagelhorn, who was seated on a footstool near Lady Margaret; ostensibly in adoration of the little coterie of fair triflers, but in reality lost in contemplation of his own newly-acquired English boots and English patois; "and Maestaire Rourton—he so happy to possess the great good-humour. If he swear a leetel, at his horse, dis morning, his horse nevaire tell a vort of the mattaire."

The ladies laughed vociferously; for Count Hagelhorn had obtained the reputation of saying humorous things; and was therefore sure of finding his platitudes received with rapturous applause.

"And you, Lady Margaret?" inquired Lord Farnley of a tall young lady sitting rapt in silent attention. "Have you been putting your rash threat into execution, of going down to the archery ground this cold day?"

"Surely you remember issuing your commands to the contrary?" said a rich mellow voice, that formed a strange contrast to the mincing affectation of the two last speakers.

"Certainly; for which reason, giving due allowance to the tendencies of your sex, I au-

gured that your ladyship had been busy at the butts ever since I quitted the house."

"As, Count Hagelhorn says of Madelina, 'You condescend to be var' provoking.' But admit your conjectures wholly defeated, when I tell you that I have been occupied in the Gallery, making an outline of the figure of the Filatrice; and that Mamma has been good enough to sit and read to me, lest I should grow frightened at sitting alone among so many awful marble effigies."

"And why have you been taking an outline?" inquired Colonel Latimer, in a hoarse grating voice, that sounded like the hinges of a prison door. "I hate outlines; they are the mere skeletons of beauty; and my imagination is by no means active enough 'to create a soul under the ribs of death.'"

"But, if I understand rightly," cried Lord Farnley, "Lady Margaret's intention is to create a body rather than a soul. I think you told me," he continued, addressing Lady Kingcombe, "that you have bespoken a model of Schadow's chef-d'œuvre from your daughter's hands?"

“ Oh, pray do not say a *model*,” replied the same sweet voice that had spoken before ; “ an imitation is the best I am likely to achieve. Mamma is very anxious to have something that will, even remotely, remind her of that beautiful figure ; and however grievous my failure, the attempt will at least afford me a useful lesson.”

“ But I am sure, if Lady Kingcombe wishes it, Henry will let some man come down from town and take a cast of the statue,” cried Lady Madelina Rowerton ; “ it will save you an infinite deal of bore and trouble.”

“ And de zendimend !” — pathetically ejaculated Count Hagelhorn. “ De width between de work of de man of de town, and of de fair hand of miladi Margarete !”

“ By the way,” exclaimed Lord Glendyne, who had been amusing himself stretching his hands to the utmost extent of the pockets of his riding frock, “ does any body happen to know whether the book-box is arrived from Ebers ? ” —

“ You inquire with all the fervour of a literary man,” croaked Colonel Latimer.

“With twice the fervour, if you knew all,” cried Glendyne, taking a pinch of snuff. “You are to understand that mine enemy (Lord Hilcaster) hath just written a book; mine enemy (being a fool) must have written a bad book; and the book of mine enemy (being a bad book) cannot fail to have been cut up by the reviews.”

“You have accounted very naturally, if not satisfactorily, for your eagerness,” said his sister Lady Margaret gravely. “But for want of a better antagonist, *I* am willing to rebut your logic. I am persuaded that Lord Hilcaster’s book is only too good for the class of people into whose hands it is likely to fall.”

“Too goot, is goot for noting,” said the Count, piquing himself above all things on the colloquiality of his English.

“Rely on it, it is a complete failure,” cried Glendyne.

“Has any one heard how it is to be spoken of in the Quarterly?”—inquired Lord Farnley.

“By the reviewers, it has been treated most unmercifully,” answered Sir Francis Norton, who had been employed one evening by Mrs.

Woodford to read aloud the opinion of one or two leading periodicals respecting the work in question. "But by the world, I fancy, it is very generally commended."

"By the *world*, I conclude you mean *society*?" said Lady Kingcombe, addressing the young baronet for the first time.

"I do; a prejudiced tribunal perhaps; and yet—"

"The one, which modern authors labour hardest to propitiate," observed Lord Farnley contemptuously.

"At least the delineators of its vices and follies, such as Lord Hilcaster," replied Norton modestly, but firmly. "Elsewhere, what chance of having the delicate lights, and shadows, and faint pencilling consistent with the lightness of the subject, duly appreciated? The chief merit of a work of fiction treating of the manners of the higher classes, is a tone of quiet good breeding; and quiet good breeding passes with the hack critics of the lesser periodicals, for the tameness of a trivial mind. Every publication, according to *their* notions, must

be piquant,—tranchant,—startling,—and capable of conveying a strong impression. In the sketch of a field flower, the leaves must be made to start forth in unnatural prominence by a vivid alternation of light and shade; and in describing simple traits of every-day life, a metaphysical analysis of motives and results must invest them with the dignity of historical fact. Lord Hilcaster's pictures are true to nature—nature in the gala robe in which he chooses to depict her; and the critics might just as well quarrel with the domestic scenes of Mieris or the circumstantialities of Gerard Douw, for not being invested with the flowing grace of Rubens, or the impressive sternness of Michael Angelo, as with Hilcaster for painting our existence as uneventful and our manners as *fade* and artificial."

"Excellent, my dear Norton!" cried Lord Farnley; "we shall soon find *you* engaging as one of the ungentle craft!" "And entering with animated volubility into conversation with his ward, he attempted to cover the embarrassment of hearing a long and pedantic speech

pronounced in those brilliant saloons, which were intended to echo only the laugh of the trifler, and reflect the smiles of beauty or fashion.

“Who *is* that prosy dog?”—croaked Colonel Latimer aside to Lady Kingcombe, as the amiable guardian, anxious to secure the drawing-room reputation of Sir Francis from further scandal, made a pretence of showing him an armoury he had just completed, to draw him from the room.

“It is Sir Francis Norton,” replied her Ladyship stiffly, “a young man, I am informed, of great promise.”

“Good fortune, and ancient family,” continued Lady Madelina; “a ward of my brother’s, and a person in whom we are all much interested. Margery, my dear, I think he would make a very nice match for *you*.”

“How!—After you must have heard or seen that Glendyne thinks him a bore, and Colonel Latimer a pedant?—As to the excess of Count Hagelhorn’s contempt you see it is beyond even *his* powers of utterance!”

“You are quite mistaken,” said her brother. “The young gentleman is somewhat more didactic than altogether suits my small capacities; but bookishness is just now the fashionable pretension. There is always some pet folly in vogue, in which my Lord A— affects to surpass my Lord B—. One year, barouche-driving,—the next, *écarte*,—the third, yachting,—the fourth smoking,—the fifth, book-making. We no longer hear it said ‘Sir William is a deuced heavy fellow—but he makes amazingly clever speeches in Parliament.’ It is,—‘Sir William’s as dull as the devil, (who, *par parenthèse*, is any thing but dull,) but he writes wonderfully clever books. ’Tis the only way now to bring oneself into any sort of distinction.”

“Ay!” grumbled Colonel Latimer; “and one may so exactly guess at a man’s deficiencies by the nature of his work! Your sober John Trot chooses to play antics before the public in a light novel; your sporting men try their hand at a sentimental romance; while the arrant fifth form dunces, expand into the historical, and give us ‘Commentaries on the

Saxon Heptarchy,'—'A Treatise on the Sacred Oil in use among the Druids,'—or 'Memoirs of Cardinal Ambonifazio.'"

"Positively, I think I must fling down the gauntlet to Hilcaster," cried Lord Glendyne. "But I scorn red tabby, and fashionable novels. No Keepsakes or octavo volumes for me. *I* shall travel, and come down upon him in a quarto. Eh, Margery! Where shall I go? What would look well in a title-page? And in what costume should I shine as frontispiece?"

"Gallop across the Pampas on a lama," cried Lady Madelina.

"Or canter over Abyssinia on an ostrich."

"Or make your appearance mounted, like Waterton, on an alligator."

"It would be difficult to make a sensation, I fear, with any thing less than the Celestial Empire. If one could but get smuggled to Pekin in a case of hardware, and come back a Mandarin of the third button! Think of lionizing for the season in London, with the order of the yellow dragon!—One might marry the best heiress going, or elope with a Lady Mayoress."

“De laty vhat?” — inquired Count Hagelhorn.

“The centauress of Cornhill,” growled Latimer.

“That was Lord Byron’s system,” said Lady Kingcombe to her son; “and see how it ended!”

“Do you allude to his marriage or death?” inquired Lady Madelina.

“Ah! my dear mother,” interrupted Lord Glendyne; “you need apprehend no heroics from me. *I* want to lead the pet-of-the-pet-ticoat life of an author; and not die the pet-of-the Annual-Register death of a hero. I ‘like not such grinning honour,’ as you would assign me. Does any one dine here to-day, Lady Madelina?”

“No! I fancy not. To-morrow we have a menagerie from the neighbourhood; to whom, for dear Farnley’s sake, we must play the amiable. Come, Margaret, allow me to disenchant the lady from her chair. There is the dressing bell!”

CHAPTER VI.

I know not whether 'twas pride,
Which out of daily fortune ever taints
The happy man ; whether defect of judgment,
To fail in the disposing of those chances
That he was master of.

CORIOLANUS.

ALTHOUGH Sir Francis Norton did not return to Thorngrove and its inhabitants,—*we must.*

Mrs. Woodford, the friend of the worthy old Cheveley was, as asserted by his ward, and admitted by his ward's valet, the widow of a younger brother of a good family, who had survived their marriage just long enough to do his best towards squandering her fortune, and his worst towards breaking her heart ;—and although she mourned his loss with the tenderness of a first affection still unextinguished, her family were far better pleased to hear of his funeral

than her wedding. During those three short years of marriage Mrs. Woodford had suffered much, but suffered silently; for she felt that if for her own sake she had a right to resent, for the sake of her child it was wiser to submit.

At length the death of the scapegrace to whom she had so rashly devoted herself, left her at liberty to make a better choice. But she made no better;—not even when importuned with the addresses of more than one distinguished suitor, could she be induced to hear of a second marriage. Experience had rendered her distrustful. Harry Woodford had promised *as* plausibly as the most plausible of her new adorers, and what had been the result of her credulity?—No! she would never marry again;—she would devote herself to her little Sybella;—she would not entrust her happiness to the keeping of mortal man.

The death of Captain Woodford had restored to his family the enjoyment of a portion of his property, of which he had been able to alienate only his life interest. Twenty thousand pounds, her mother's fortune, were settled upon Sybella;

and on the income arising from this vested fund, Mrs. Woodford retired to the neighbourhood of her family estates in Yorkshire; and with the aid of occasional journeys to London for the assistance of masters, had managed to complete her daughter's education without a day's separation from her darling. Nothing could be happier, nothing more endearing than the union between such a child and such a mother. Living almost exclusively in the society of her amiable and indulgent parent, not a thought had ever crossed Sybella's mind unknown to Mr. Woodford. Her opinions, her sentiments, even her girlish sallies against the quizzicalities of such country neighbours as Mrs. Homerton Frobishyre, were expressed unreservedly; and Mr. Cheveley, their nearest neighbour, who for fifteen years had watched the unfolding of the flower, and obtained the confidence and esteem of the mother by an unremitting series of good offices, often observed with admiration the almost sisterly tone of friendship subsisting between them. Sybella was quite as proud of her mother as Mrs.

Woodford of her child ; and the first movement of each originated on all occasions in consideration for the comfort of the other. Ambition, when seared in early life by a general blight of the affections, seldom puts forth a second shoot. Mrs. Woodford never grew dissatisfied with the obscure seclusion she had selected ; and laboured only to embellish her solitude for the sake of her beloved daughter.

If any course of life and education can be favourable to the maintenance of female purity, it must surely be such as the almost conventual simplicity of Mrs. Woodford's. Sybella grew up seeing no evil, hearing no evil, thinking no evil, speaking—suspecting none. Her manners were ladylike and graceful ; but she boasted none of the meretricious accomplishments of the advertising-governess system. And when she grew to womanhood, and was admitted as a member into those circles of which she had been hitherto the plaything, the only difference perceptible in addition to the development of her beauty, was increased deference towards her mother, increased reserve with such persons as

Mrs. Frobishyre and Lady Loring. Mrs. Woodford felt, indeed, that she should like to talk with her in a somewhat altered tone respecting the world and its ways: but like a tender mother she shrank from giving to her child to taste of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; and felt that it would be time enough for the lessons of worldly policy to force themselves on her attention, when the beautiful bloom of childhood had withered on her cheek. She was apprehensive perhaps, that Sybella might question her touching the painful experience of her own earlier years; or provoke inquiries concerning her future prospects, incompatible with the secrecy promised by herself to old Cheveley, on a project they had for many years vaguely yet sanguinely cherished, of uniting the fair recluse of Thorngrove with his ward Sir Francis Norton.

One would think that love was not among the most natural impulses of human nature, and marriage among the holiest institutions of human destiny, by the care taken by parents and guardians in general, to silence all mention

of either in presence of young persons. The subject is treated as profane or contraband; till, like the lacunes in a mutilated book or newspaper, it is invested with undue value; and half the foolish love-letters and runaway matches written and perpetrated, have arisen in families where a rigid "censure" was maintained by its elder branches. Thanks to the unreserved communication between young persons in English society, a timid girl is often exposed to addresses which her own mother would treat as a very shocking subject of discussion; and at a period of life, and under circumstances when the assiduities of a lover require all a parent's counsels to counteract their evil or promote their advantageous tendency, the very name is banished, as repugnant to delicacy and good taste. Mrs. Woodford had not been remiss in disciplining Sybella to all the forms and usages of good society; had discoursed with her without hesitation on many sacred and many abstruse subjects; but the colour rose in her face, and her breath was suspended, whenever she was about

to say to her: "Mr. Cheveley is expecting a visit from his young ward Sir Francis Norton. Take care, my dear Sybel, that you do not interest yourself too warmly in his favour." She was of La Bruyère's opinion, that many people would never experience the tender passion did they not hear it talked about; and trembled at the idea of introducing so fatal an enemy into the bosom of her child.

Even when the young Baronet's daily visits to Thorngrove, and the opinions entertained on the subject by the Cheveley family, left her little cause to doubt that he was becoming seriously attached to Sybella, she could not find courage for a discussion of the subject. "Girlish as she is," thought Mrs. Woodford, "she certainly does not see through his advances, or dream of the sentiments entertained by Sir Francis Norton. Nor dare I enlighten her on the subject; for should he change his mind, (and young as he is, any objection on the part of Lord Farnley might determine him against the match,) I should never pardon myself for having filled her mind, and perhaps her heart, with anticipations

never to be realized." Poor woman ! she did not perceive that the mischief was already done ; that it was against herself, against her own sentiments, Sybella required a warning ; and that, whatever might be the case with the young visitor at Cheveley Manor, the young resident at Thorngrove was, as Meta Klopstock phrases it, " very seriously in love."

Day after day, the prudent mother and the plotting guardian found their young hero return and return to the green drawing-room ; morning after morning, devise new walks to be taken with the mother and daughter ; new rides to be enjoyed with the daughter and Mrs. Cheveley ; and evening after evening, draw closer to Sybella's harp or worktable. Rejoiced in the success of their scheme, they readily detected the rapturous admiration beaming from the eyes of the young lover,—the mild satisfaction experienced by the young lady in his presence.—Not a word of love passed between them ; but all their actions, and all their expressions, were manifestly actuated by its influence. Miss Woodford could now detect the step of Sir Francis long

ere he approached, and his figure as soon as he came in sight. Unconsciously she grew dispirited and languid when his daily visit was postponed by the delay of a few minutes; but no sooner were his horse's hoofs heard on the gravel than her colour returned, and her eyes brightened; and she would rise from her work to fly and kiss her mother, ere he entered the room,—although not a syllable of comment or gratulation on the subject ever passed between them.

Mrs. Woodford had experienced a wish that her daughter might become sensible to the merits of Sir Francis, and was captivated by the graceful ingenuousness of his manners; but she grew almost alarmed in noting this excess of sensibility. Every day her delight in his company grew more apparent; her exultation in his devotion more absorbing. Mrs. Woodford fancied for a moment that even she, the idolizing mother, was becoming secondary in importance with the beloved Sybella. She longed to implore her to keep watch over the growth of her new partiality. But in what words to admonish her on so delicate a point?—In what terms, without

terrifying her with an insight into the abyss on whose verge she was standing, to forewarn her against the mighty power of love?—

It was under these circumstances that one morning, after a parting the preceding day between Norton and Sybella of more than ordinary familiarity and regard, the usual hour of his visit arrived, and passed away, and brought him no more. For some time the disappointed girl said not a word on the subject; but towards evening she suddenly broke forth into exclamations against the tiresomeness of Mrs. Cheveley, the *exigeance* of her husband, and the probability that some absurd commission given to Sir Francis Norton by either one or the other, had been the means of keeping him away from Thorngrove. Already she felt the weariness, the difficulty of passing a whole day without seeing him. She predicted that he would drop in according to his frequent custom to tea, and suffered the tea-things to remain for two long hours upon the table. At length the hour came for closing the windows and retiring to rest; and Sybella, more petulant than she had

been ever seen before, was compelled to go to bed. Yet even afterwards, when the house-dog chanced to bark at some stray passenger on the road, she could not help fancying that Frank was come at last to offer a moment's apology for his inexplicable absence.

The next day she was on the lawn by daylight. The Autumn and the flowers were almost over; yet still by recourse to a few sheltered nooks and corners, where auriculas, pinks, and gentianellas were to be found blooming a second time,—to her geraniums, and the beautiful rose of four seasons,—Miss Woodford managed to refresh the bouquets of the drawing-room, and give it a summer aspect almost as bright and glowing as when he entered it first. For the first time, she prepared for his arrival; placed his favourite chair on his favourite spot; opened her music books and perfected herself in his favourite airs; took up her guitar, and after trying a few chords, threw it aside again; to wander once more among the shrubberies, and cross the lawn, and marvel what strange event could have occurred at Cheveley Manor!

She even sauntered to the gate, and stood musing upon the grim expanse of Goldington Common. Alas!—nothing was there but the furze, sprinkled like Danaë with its golden shower; except the remnants of Widow Wall's flock of Midsummer geese, and a donkey and foal belonging to the village postmaster.

Again the day passed, and still no Sir Francis Norton appeared. For a few moments Sybella grew angry, and determined when he *did* make his appearance to receive him with the coldness of offended dignity. But this notion was quickly dispelled by fresh alarms for his safety; his horse was by no means a safe one—his habits were so absent—what might not have happened?

“We will drive over to Cheveley to-morrow, and inquire what has become of Sir Francis Norton,” said her mother, compassionating her silent distress. “I dare say he has been staying with the Homerton Frobyshires.”

“I have no doubt of it!” cried poor Sybella, brightening at this fortunate suggestion, and feeling happier than she had done for eight-and-forty hours. “For as soon as he quitted us

on Tuesday, I went to the gate, and saw him at a distance stopping with them at the turnpike. I dare say they were inviting him to the Abbey."

On the following day—the third day, (the third, an epoch on many occasions so momentous,) the arrival of Mr. Cheveley sufficed to dispel this illusion. But although he came to communicate the startling intelligence that Sir Francis had actually left the Manor, actually quitted the county,—he uttered the tidings with a glance so significant to the mother, a smile so cheering to the daughter, that even before he added, "But he will soon be amongst us again," poor Sybella felt assured that all was right.

"My ward is gone to his other guardian, my Lord Farnley," continued the kind-hearted old man. "Although I flatter myself Frank pins no great reliance on the advice of that fine, flimsy, fashionable gentleman, yet he judges it his duty (and very properly) to go through the ceremony of consulting him before he takes any step of importance. He will not be long at Farnley;—no doubt we shall have him back by the end of the week."

Long before the end of the week, however, Mr. Cheveley had received a letter from Sir Francis, which, although he could not entirely interpret its motives or meaning, explained in very comprehensible terms that he had no thoughts of returning to the Manor, and that he should probably pass his Christmas in Shropshire; nay, the concluding sentence, "Pray remember me to the Lorings, Woodfords, and Frobishyres," was of a nature to put to flight all his romantic illusions, and to startle the old man into an inquiry whether he had not been deceiving himself and his old friend, in the supposition of Norton's attachment to Sybella. He was alarmed, vexed, angry with himself in admitting on what slight authority he could have grounded his belief and assertion. One thing was plain enough; that having assisted in deceiving Mrs. Woodford, it was his business to take the earliest possible opportunity of acquainting her with the real state of the case.

Unluckily, as he entered the green drawing-room, he was struck by the sonorous voice of Mrs. Homerton Frobishyre; who, on learning

the abrupt departure of the young Baronet, had come to examine what sort of countenance the family at Thorngrove would put upon the business. Chancing, however, to call at Loring Park on her road, she had there become acquainted with several new rumours; and was now come to communicate rather than to seek intelligence.

“ I have been sitting with Lady Loring,” said she, as Mr. Cheveley was announced; “ who informs me that Loring’s steward has received a letter from that impudent valet of Sir Francis Norton’s; and that they are gayer at Farnley, than any thing that ever was known. That demure gentleman, who was so cold and quiet amongst us all, is now acting plays and dancing Mazurkas. But then they have half a dozen professed beauties staying in the house to inspire him:—that dangerous woman Lady Madelina Rowerton, and Lady Margaret Enville, and I know not how many more. I dare-say he amuses them finely at the expense of his Yorkshire friends ! ”

“ Frank Norton is incapable of acting un-

gratefully or ungenerously towards any one," cried Mr. Cheveley with indignation.

"Oh! you know, my dear sir, young men *will* be young men. We have no reason to suppose Sir Francis a *lusus naturæ*; and now that he is among those ranting, flighty, graceless, unprincipled women of fashion—"

Even Mrs. Homerton Frobishyre had no courage to proceed. A glance towards the opposite mirror showed her Sybella Woodford's face so colourless and bewildered in its expression, that she was frightened into silence.

CHAPTER VII.

Des gens qui ont reçu de la nature l'aimable talent de sourire à propos ; qui savent entendre finesse à tout, et trouver mille petits traits ingénieux dans les choses les plus communes.

MONTESQUIEU.

NOTHING could be easier, yet nothing more strictly in accordance with the established ceremonial of life, than the mode of existence at the residence of Lord Farnley. Few men in the kingdom could boast of higher refinement of mind and manners ; and although somewhat past the prime of youth, the prime of manhood still lent animation to his character and dignity to his person. No longer estimated in the world of fashion as a marrying man, a lingering tinge of romance in his air and tone still rendered him an acceptable companion to

women of all ages,—from the débutante to the superannuated coquette; and, thoroughly Parisianized in his notions by frequent residence abroad, Lord Farnley looked upon music, dancing, and what is termed *esprit de société*, as the natural and indispensable elements of a life of luxury:—gaiety was not in his house, as in those of many other of his aristocratic contemporaries, an effort made for credit sake and the amusement of others,—a gala suit assumed at intervals, to be thrown off after the departure of the company. No one denied him the character of a munificent patron,—a magnificent noble,—an accomplished man;—and if some there were who sought to deteriorate his high reputation, by hinting that he was heartless, superficial, and a slave to fashion, Lord Farnley had too many old and attached friends to give colour to the charge. Certain of the “wit-crackers” still persisted, that nothing could be easier than for the lord of Farnley Castle to have friends as old and as attached as he chose to purchase in the golden friend-bazaar of London Society; but it is ascribing too much to the baseness of human

nature to suppose that all the smiles smiled upon him on his entrance to Almack's,—all the sighs sighed for him on the newspaper announcement of his indispositions,—arose from a tender predilection for his excellent balls, and still more excellent dinners.

It must be admitted, that the inexperienced head of Sir Francis Norton was very speedily intoxicated by the artificial atmosphere into which he was thus introduced. Sages and institutors, moral or religious, assure us that the dignity of man is, or ought to be, inaccessible to external impressions;—that he should see with his mind's eye, and feel at the suggestion of his principles. But so long as five influential senses are allotted to the children of wrath, to adorn and dulcify the ruggedness of their path of life, it is expecting too much to suppose that the boy of one-and-twenty will become unsusceptible to the sweet sounds, soft things, and delicious cates, which made Christopher Sly, the tinker, imagine himself “a lord indeed.” The excitement of a scene, such as that presented by the gilded saloons, sombre

libraries, glowing conservatories, and dainty boudoirs of Farnley, — illuminated by painting, sculpture, and all the beautiful visions which throw a poetic veil over the every-day monotonies of life,—redolent of fragrance,—gleaming with artificial light,—“without one jarring atom” to mar their luxurious harmony,—and contrasted, moreover, with the chilling dulness of the Manor, the tame mediocrity of Thorngrove villa, could not fail to predispose the mind of Frank Norton for a favourable view of the fair sprites by whom these delicious regions were fitly haunted.—Lady Madelina laughed and jested,—Lady Margaret smiled and philosophised,—and Lady Kingcombe, like a superior spirit, alternately enlightened them with her wisdom, or encouraged them with her endearments. Lord Farnley’s giddy sister was the daughter of her dearest friend; and the excellent woman loved her even to her very weakness;—but Lady Margaret, her own child,—her only, her gifted child,—had no weakness to require indulgence. She was mild, wise, virtuous, beautiful, submissive,—all that the ten-

derest mother could desire in her daughter. Unconsciously, young Norton whispered to himself, after an evening passed in the society of the brilliant party assembled at the Castle, that Lady Kingcombe had all Mrs. Woodford's feminine maternal gentleness, with higher breeding and greater decision of character:—and that Lady Margaret, with scarcely less than Sybella's personal attraction, had a nobler sense of her own dignity, and powers of mind more worthy to command the reverence and esteem of her husband. — Lady Margaret Envile would as soon have encouraged the addresses of the butler, as of the boor,—the brute,—the bore,—Lord Loring's son. Inebriated by the thousand sources of enjoyment open to him every evening at the Castle, he was blind enough to attribute all to Lady Margaret's presence: making no allowance for the efforts of the French cook,—the Italian confectioner,—the bugles sounding in the vestibule,—the ruby Burgundy, the topazine Tokay,—the spicy Mocha,—the luscious Curaçoa. On reaching the saloon, where new books, new

music, new engravings, new caricatures, new plants, (incessantly renovated by the skill and labour of those who exercise their gift of ingenuity only to stimulate the exhausted fancy of the great), were unfolded 'around him;—where the mechanical organ poured forth its involuntary volume of sound,—where the golden harp appeared to yield spontaneous music,—where the hours were marked by melody,—and the bowers of the East seemed transported as by an enchanter's wand,—he beheld Lady Margaret, leaning quietly over her book; and fancied that the spectacle of *her* gentle beauty, alone caused his pulse to beat, and his heart to flutter with delight.

“ Margaret has so much real dignity of manners ! ” observed his guardian, contriving to get him into a remote sofa, one evening, a few days after his arrival. “ And I confess *I* lean to the prejudice, that dignity of manner is inseparable from dignity of mind. I have no patience with your little weeping, blushing, sighing, dying damsels,—who tremble at the death of a butterfly, and make a scene if the ‘ object of their

affections' is kept away from home an hour later than usual, by a good run with the hounds."

"Nor I;—I hate sentimental girls;—they are generally vulgar, and always silly."

"Now pray observe with what self-respect Margaret parries the adulation of that coxcomb Hagelhorn! Without offending *him*, or showing herself offended, she contrives to prove to every person present, that she entertains no intention of encouraging his addresses. I cannot bear to see a young person trifling *faute de mieux* with any man's courtship; even when, as in the present instance, she knows it to be suggested by interested views."

"Nor I,—I detest coquettes!" cried Frank fervently, and again involuntarily reverting to Mr. Loring.

"I have no hesitation in saying to you, my dear Norton," continued Lord Farnley, more explicitly, "that nothing would give me greater pleasure than to promote your union with the charming daughter of my friend Lord Kingcombe. I am not like our friend Cheveley, who entraps you to his dull old mansion, and with

a pretension of giving you good shooting and teaching you the difference between Swedish turnips and early Dutch, throws you in the way of a pretty girl dropped from the clouds, without birth,—without fortune,—without”—

“If you allude to Miss Woodford,” interrupted Sir Francis, feeling himself called on to speak, “believe me, Mr. Cheveley made every effort in his power to prevent our becoming acquainted. Her mother is the widow of a baronet’s son, and lives with credit and respectability, and”—

“Credit and respectability—one would imagine you were talking of an innkeeper! And a baronet’s son! My dear Frank,—when you have lived more and longer in the world, you will find *that* rank of life present precisely the worst class of educated society;—displaying all the arrogance of mock dignity, and all the boorishness of country squireism. But to return to a more agreeable subject!—Lady Margaret Enville, already in independent possession of two thousand a year, will also inherit a handsome fortune from her father; and, in the event

of Glendyne's death (her only brother), she comes into one of the most ancient baronies in the kingdom, and the whole of the Kingcombe estates ! These inducements, I am aware, are nothing to a man like yourself,—already endowed with all that is indispensable for happiness ; but with *me*, your guardian, they have some weight ; nay, even with yourself, Frank, they ought not to be wholly destitute of interest, when you consider that they cannot but secure a brilliant alliance for Lady Margaret ; and that, in the event of her becoming your wife, you are pre-assured her motives are disinterested ! ”

“ *Wife !*—my dear Lord ! you are surely very rapid in your conclusions?—*You*, too, who were the first to warn me against the perils of early matrimony ! ”

“ I was, indeed ; and even now, should be far better satisfied to know you were on the point of making the tour of Europe, than of making proposals to any ladyship in the land. But this, I see clearly, cannot be. You are just the fellow to fall in love at the first race

ball with the belle of the evening, and tender your proposals to the Squire her father the following morning. I am happy to find (no matter how) that you have not seriously entangled yourself with this pretty adventurer of Cheveley Manor,—for, by Heavens, I would as soon see you married to a strolling actress; and if you *must* provide yourself with a Lady Norton before you settle for life under shelter of your own old oaks, let her be at least one who, like Lady Margaret Enville, accepts you as a husband from her own free choice and predilection; not because you can give her a comfortable jointure, and have a certain number of slaves in livery dining daily in your servants' hall. I abhor the market system on which the girls of the present day are brought up to dispose of themselves!”

“And so do I. But believe me, Sybella Woodford is as incapable as——”

“Believe *you*? No, no. I have not a grain of faith for a single word you can utter on that head; if not in love, you have only escaped by the breadth of a hair. But believe *me*, Frank,

that I never would have given my consent to your union with a girl whose alliance would have conferred neither honour nor advantage on you or on your children."

Meanwhile the evenings at Farnley Castle were enlivened with amateur music of the highest order, varied by an occasional attempt at a charade or proverb, when the arrival of fresh visitors and more determined pleasure-seekers suggested the effort; and the mornings devoted to those convenient parties of pleasure, where ruins are to be scrambled over, and ferries passed, and sketches taken; and whereas the weather, although mild for the season, was such as none but a madcap like Lady Madelina, or a novice like Lady Margaret, or an *insouciant* like Lord Glendyne, would have chosen for similar expeditions, Sir Francis Norton was doubly in request to follow the fair sketcher with her shawl and boa, to cloak her up in the open carriage, or sustain her steps in the boat. Had he not taken such tender care of her and watched her so closely, Lady Margaret might

have fallen a victim to some of the wild pranks of the Rowertons, or to the absence of mind of her clever but eccentric brother.

Glendyne, indeed, seemed to attach himself as readily to Lord Farnley's ward as if he entered into the project of his friend for making Sir Francis Norton his brother-in-law. There was something in the inartificial character of the young Baronet extremely prepossessing in the eyes of a man who had been living in, with, and for the world ever since he was emancipated from his nankin petticoats; and who had passed through Westminster, Cambridge, and the Guards, without falling in with a single spirit, male or female, on the purity of which he could implicitly pin his faith.

"Norton is the only fellow I ever met," he observed to Colonel Latimer, as they commenced their twenty-third game of billiards one rainy morning, "who is perfectly single-hearted without being a bumpkin. It is so comfortable to an idle fellow like myself, to live

with a man against whom one is not obliged to be perpetually on one's guard."

"He is *new* at present," croaked the Colonel. "Let us see what a season at Newmarket and a bout at Crockford's will do for him."

"No doubt they *would do* for him; and it is precisely by being *done* that a fellow learns to become a *do* in his turn. But I don't see what concern Norton has with either your Scylla or your Charybdis. *He* has no *caste* to lose by not being known on the turf. *His* grandfather was not the owner of Gohanna; *his* father was not Buckle's first patron; *his* buffet is not graced with as many racing cups as those of Sardanapalus or Belshazzar in one of Martin's pictures. The rattle of *his* infancy was not a dice-box; nor was the arithmetic of *his* boyhood imparted in the goodly game of *vingt-et-un*."

"Like——"

"My lordship's!—I, you know, my dear Colonel (a canon by Jupiter!—the first good stroke I have made to-day)—I, you know, (mark two)—am intitled by right hereditary

to pass (five)—as many hours out of the twenty-four as I can exist without sleeping or feeding,—at the gambling table. But Norton's vocation is that of——”

“Becoming lord and master, or baronet and slave, to the lovely Lady Margaret Enville!”—

“Do you think so?” cried Glendyne, throwing down his cue, and enchanted with a view of the subject which had not yet presented itself to his mercurial imagination. “Have you any reason to fancy he is in love with Margery?—Faith, I'll go and ask him! It would be the very thing for both of them, and more than the very thing for me. I have always been so afraid of hating my brother-in-law!—I wonder whether Margery likes him!”

Without the slightest regard for the fine feelings of either party, Lord Glendyne did actually go in search of Sir Francis to make this singular inquiry; and having chanced to time his investigation just after a long morning passed by Norton in the library with Lord Farnley, his sister Rowerton, and Lady Margaret Enville, in

which the companionableness of the latter on a rainy day, her general intelligence and very particular diffidence, had become charmingly apparent, the young baronet had no hesitation in avowing that he thought her the most enchanting creature in the world, and that he required only a little encouragement from herself, and the sanction of her family, to tender his proposals for her hand. Entering warmly into a project which promised so welcome an addition to what he called the "domestic Dullery at Kingcombe Hall," Lord Glendyne promised his hearty support to the motion; and from that period rested not till he had secured an affirmative from Lady Margaret and her parents. Sir Francis Norton's good qualities needed little avouchment; his fine ingenuous temper revealed every feeling of his bosom. His fortune and expectations, although by no means equivalent to the pretensions of the lady of his love, sufficed at once to satisfy *her* ambition and the views of her father; Lord Kingcombe, who was something of a political jobber, preferring a son-in-law without

public connexions, who would be amenable to his views, to an older man, with opinions and pledges of his own; who would neither sit for the Kingcombe boroughs, nor support the Kingcombe interest.

In short, there was not a word to be urged against the match ! The young couple became daily more attached, and were unexceptionably well assorted to each other. Of the Kingcombes, — father, mother, brother, all — were pleased;—Lord Farnley perfectly satisfied;—and if Mr. Cheveley were less disposed to exult in the happy prospects announced to him in a letter from Frank within seven weeks of quitting the Manor, he opposed no obstacle to the marriage. He consented in silence, indeed, and declined the gracious invitation dispatched to him by the Earl and Countess of Kingcombe to be present at the ceremony. But on affixing his signature to the deeds of settlement forwarded him by the family solicitor, he fairly admitted to the young clerk charged with the duty of witnessing their execution, that no-

thing could be more liberal in a pecuniary point of view than the conduct of the Enville family.

It was a very handsome wedding. The jewels and equipages selected by the exquisite taste of Lord Farnley, were perfect in their way; and he himself vied with the delighted Glendyne in loading Sir Francis and Lady Margaret Norton with all that could embellish their new home. All the world admitted that there could not be a more suitable match, or a more fortunate couple. Even Wittenham was of opinion that "Norton had done a devilish good thing for himself;"—and Lord Farnley, when he returned to the castle after witnessing the gorgeous ceremony, and the festivities by which it was followed, could not forbear congratulating himself that he had secured his handsome, intelligent, distinguished ward, from an alliance with a country dowdy; who would probably have crushed him into obscurity with the weight of her vulgar mind, and disgusted him with society by her unacceptableness in its circles.

"Poor Frank!" said he, as he paced

through his magnificent statue gallery. “He will one day or other thank me for having prevented him throwing himself away on an un-presentable quiz; fit only to grace the parlour of Cheveley Manor and copy cures for the heartburn into Lady Bountiful’s family recipe book.—A half-bred country miss, is the most odious animal in the creation !”

CHAPTER VIII.

And what, I pray, is Margaret more than her?—
Her father is no better than an Earl.
Or what is wedlock forced but a hell,
An age of discord and continual strffe.

HENRY VI.

Two years had elapsed since the celebration of Lady Margaret Enville's well-omened nuptials. The young bachelor, Sir Francis Norton, was settled down into the married man, and father of a young Frank;—the old bachelor, Lord Farnley was still a bachelor; and as is frequently the case, under such circumstances, grew younger in proportion as he advanced in years. At five-and-thirty, he had taken no heed of time; at forty, or somewhat more, he was beginning to be

studious concerning his appearance, and ambitious of passing for the best dressed and best mounted man in London.

Of course he succeeded. It is so easy to succeed, so easy to be popular, with the assistance of a splendid fortune, an ancient name, and the power of applying our interest and opulence to the service of other people! Lord Farnley's means of obligation were exhausted by no privileged hangers on, no swarm of locusts following in his train. His only sister, Lady Madelina, was married to one of the first commoners in the realm, and elevated above all interested views; and Farnley House in town, and Farnley Castle in the country, (to say nothing of his opera boxes, equipages, and ministerial influence,) were freely open to the speculations of the mercenary. But although his lordship was not altogether born to be a dupe, a long career of distinction, and exposure to the flatteries of society, had endued him, perhaps, with too excessive a reliance on his own sagacity. It is a hard task for a potentate to distinguish between

the homage paid to his ermined mantle, jewelled crown, gilded throne, and the reverence of personal veneration ;—even bishops and judges naturally, but unadvisedly, take to themselves all the respect testified towards the wigs adorning their very learned and very reverend shoulders. If Sir Francis Norton had deluded himself by the supposition that all the satisfaction he experienced in dining at his guardian's well-served table, arose from the circumstance of being placed next to Lady Kingcombe's daughter, his noble host was persuaded that the charm of his own graceful manners, and the sprightliness of his epigrammatic conversation had a considerable share in attracting so many distinguished visitors to his board. Worshipped by a little system of satellites, he had the weakness to fancy himself personally supreme in society, and exclusively privileged to regulate other people's affairs, and interpret other people's conduct.

That his lordship was *not* superior to the common lot of mortals, and that his judgment

was by no means infallible, was proved by the very marriage he had so officiously formed for his ward. Whether his activity had arisen from regard to Lady Margaret, or regard to Sir Francis Norton, his good intentions were equally infructuous. The domestic affairs of Norton Park had, it is true, run pretty smoothly in their channel; for during the first two years of wedlock, even the common obstacles incumbrances and drawbacks which render modern life a sort of hornpipe in fetters, are luckily wanting. Neither bride nor bridegroom, neither husband nor wife, had yet infringed the laws of mutual affection and forbearance,—neither of them had been guilty of any wanton extravagance,—neither of them had done any thing to rouse the jealousy of the other;—and yet, if the truth must be told, both were dissatisfied.

Lady Margaret, accustomed to the gorgeous splendours of Kingcombe, and brought up from her childhood in the midst of a crowd, was startled by the sober solitude of the domestic

life allotted to her ; while Norton discovered, to his great surprise, that the routine he had despised as monotonous at Cheveley Manor, was after all the ordinary mode of life of an English country gentleman. Thanks to indifferent neighbours and worse roads, Norton Park was a dull uneventful place ; and he was too young, and had seen too little of the world, to have formed a large connection to aid him in supporting the ponderous weight of leisure. The consequence of this deficiency was apparent in the fact, that of the persons assembled as visitors under his roof, all—or the greater part—were friends or adherents of the Kingcombe family. At first, indeed, his pride was gratified by this circumstance. He was as much pleased to be surrounded by the friends and connexions of a beloved wife, as by the friends and connexions of the Right Hon. the Earl of Kingcombe. The consort who had stooped from so high an estate to select his humble self as the stay and guidance of her life, had sacrificed so much in his favour, and marked her personal attachment

in so disinterested a manner, that he could not requite the generosity of her conduct by too much deference or too much self abnegation.

It was his eager desire that she should form her new home according to her own good liking; select her own associates, command her own measures.

Unluckily, the woman thus unreservedly trusted, had not sufficient experience of the world for so important a charge. One only mode of existence, the routine of Kingcombe, had been open to her observation; and she naturally fell into the error of supposing that all which was good for Lady Margaret Enville, was good for Lady Margaret Norton; that the habits, style, and associations of her father's house, were applicable to the establishment of a Baronet, boasting, even with the acquisition of her own income, considerably less than ten thousand a year. Yorkshire is a county of Colossal fortunes; the standard of comparison is on a mighty scale: and the magnats of the

Farnley class, who observed the Nortons vying (as they supposed) with the magnificence of their equipage, or the solidity of their hospitality, now grew spiteful and contemptuous. The squires, squiresses, and squirrelings, who had been more than on a par with the good Sir Thomas his father, finding the present proprietor of Norton Park affect fashions and displays beyond their means of competition, could not help attributing his new-fangled notions to the pride of being married to an earl's daughter; while his superiors in rank, the nobility of the county, laughed at the young baronet as full of unmeaning assumptions. A contested election having festered the venom thus engendered, he was even nicknamed (by a libellous, pamphleteering, attorney's clerk of the neighbouring town) "Lord Margaret Norton;" and it was pretty generally asserted, if not generally believed, not only that the gray mare was the better steed in his establishment, but that the really dignified and indolent Lady Margaret, was a domineering termagant. Old Cheveley

was assailed with rumours, which created more regret than surprise in his mind, that his *ci-devant* ward was running rapidly through his fortune, by emulating the magnificence of the class upon which he had so unadvisedly engrafted himself; and that Lady Margaret had filled his house with “her people,” and his head with deference to her consequence.

All this was totally unnecessary.—Sir Francis Norton was in his own circumstances too independent, and in his own rank of life too respectable, to need any importance derived from his matrimonial alliance; and the first time the rumour reached him, (and, thanks to the amiable ingenuousness of modern friendship, what personal imputation is long in reaching our ears?—) that the world was of opinion he was governed by his wife, and his wife governed by an overweening spirit of vanity and pretension, he felt, as he had a right to feel, bitterly mortified. Nothing could be more natural than that he should immediately proceed to a revisal of his whole line of conduct since his marriage, and

to an examination of Lady Margaret's real influence over his conduct and feelings. Nothing could be more natural than that, looking through the distempered medium supplied by the malicious interference of others, he should see every thing in a distorted shape. He could not, indeed, even in his haste, accuse Lady Margaret of petulance or arrogance;—he still loved her too well to discover any faults in her. But he began to fancy, that however free in her own person from the evil qualities imputed to her by the evil tongues of mankind, her mother was by no means equally faultless. Lady Kingcombe was, in fact a very superior woman; and, —possessing over her son-in-law and daughter that influence which (as Leonora di Galigai expressed it) a strong mind always possesses over a weak,—never hesitated in thinking and acting for the Nortons as she would have done for herself,—in reproving their absurdities and pointing out their neglected duties. Tenderly attached to Margaret, her only daughter, as to

her better self,—and tenderly attached to Margaret's husband for Margaret's sake, she looked upon Sir Francis as a son of her own, and dealt with his little foibles as with those of Lord Gledyng; forgetting or unaware—(for there are few points on which even sensible women are so grossly ignorant as on that of the management of the harder sex) — that no man of three-and-twenty will bear to be tutored by his mother, — still less by the mother of other people.

Lord Kingcombe's political leading strings were, if possible, still more irksome than Lady Kingcombe's lectures; for Sir Francis felt that his lordship had not the excuse of an overweening interest for his dear girl, to apologize for his despotism. It could signify very little to the comfort of Lady Margaret Norton, whether her husband voted on the leather question, or supported ministers in their opposition to the establishment of a Coast Blockade off Cape Cod;—and it was therefore a double impertinence on the part of the Earl to address

two letters of instruction and two more of re-monstrance to his son-in-law, concerning his vote on those momentous motions. Sir Francis felt himself, moreover, of an age to decide unprompted on the propriety of bowing or being seen on the arm of this or that leading orator or politician. Yet he was perpetually getting into scrapes with his father-in-law on similar formalities. He was always hearing, "My dear Norton, you don't sufficiently reflect that, although your actions are of no manner of importance in themselves, yet as committing your party they are of the greatest moment."—Thus hectoring, he often wished he had no party;—and sometimes, if the truth must be told, that he had no father-in-law.

Lord Glendyne was the member of the family against whom he cherished least resentment; yet even Glendyne was not always cautious of giving him offence. With every necessary feeling of regard for Frank, whom he still looked upon as an open warmhearted fellow, Lord Glendyne was fully aware that Lady

Margaret Enville, handsome, rich, high-born, and accomplished, might, in a worldly point of view have formed a far better connection for herself. He was therefore prepared that Norton should feel himself an obliged party; that he should be conscious to the fullest extent of his happiness in possessing so lovely and loving a wife; and, upon one or two occasions when Norton, piqued by the overbearing tone of Lady Kingcombe into the assertion of his prerogative, seemed inclined to mark somewhat strongly his sense of the independence of his own position, Lord Glendyne was certainly moved to treat of Lady Margaret Norton to her husband as "*his sister*,"—very much as if he forgot that she was also the wife of Sir Francis. But this was not the worst. Glendyne, by nature caustic and clever, was one of those persons who indulge to any extent their love of mockery, regardless whose feelings they offend; or rather, who conceive their own bon mots so super-excellent as to excuse their poignancy even in the eyes of the unfortunate butt. If Sir

Thomas More was known to jest on the scaffold, Glendyne had been heard to make mockery of his dentist in the crisis of an operation ; which is as near as modern heroism can approach to that of the olden time. Even liking his brother-in-law as well as he did, and he was very sincere in his goodwill towards him, the young lord found it impossible to resist the temptation to make fun of him when he “talked squire ;”—or to show up the subservience of his deference towards the superior cleverness and fashion of his guardian of Farnley Castle.

All these things, and a thousand minor touches, so easy to feel so trivial to describe, united to produce many an unsatisfactory hour in Sir Francis Norton’s life of prosperity and distinction. He hallooed as loud or louder than ever with the hounds,—rode harder,—drank harder,—and affected a sort of dare-all joviality, in order to impress the world with a notion of his independence. If he had not yet gone the length of acknowledging to himself that he

would have been a happier man as the husband of the tranquil unworldly Sybella, the son-in-law of the gentle Mrs. Woodford, he was willing to admit in his soliloquies (all men are prone to soliloquize during the operation of shaving, or as they ride home from hunting) that Lord Farnley was right;—that a man may marry too early;—that it is as well to taste the pleasures of life before we begin to feast upon its happiness;—that in doubling our joys and sorrows by matrimony, we lose half our self-content and all our self-security. It was very delightful, to be sure, to be welcomed home by the beautiful and stately Margaret; but it would have been equally so to have retained the privilege of staying to dine at that “devilish good fellow Marrowby’s,” close to where the hounds had found;—and still more so, to be able to run up to town, and run over to Paris, *en garçon*, to see the new opera and hear the debates in the new Chamber. Men are apt to talk of “running” hither and thither as if life were a steeple chase; and enjoyment

attainable in proportion to the speed of the sport.

These things, or rumours of these things, were sufficient to prove to the worthy veteran at Cheveley Manor, that if he cherished any rancour against his *ci-devant* ward for his blind but blameable subservience to Lord Farnley's projects, the conduct of Sir Francis Norton had brought its own retribution. He had not, however, the comfort of sauntering to Thorn-grove to make a clear breast of his vindictive feelings. The Woodfords were gone abroad. Not that Sybella had exhibited any vocation for planting herself either under a monument or upon one, "to pine inly and smile at grief." Her mother had the happiness of recognizing a right spirit in her,—of perceiving that from the moment she was aware of having been capriciously deserted and unworthily used by Sir Francis Norton, she ceased to think of him with tenderness. But she dreaded the saucy sneers of Mrs. Homerton Frobishyre, and the stately scorn of the Lorings, who had never

pardoned her unhesitating rejection of the suit of their son and heir; and Mrs. Woodford wisely judged, that it would be better to remove her beloved girl beyond the reach of their ill-nature.

END OF VOL. II.

